Contents of Iran Newsletter #26 at end.

Contents: Iran Newsletter #27, June 3, 2018

These publications prepare us to resist US malignant hostility toward Iran. If you are short of time, I have put up front two brief essays and an easily read book: Art’s column, Gray’s essay, and Benjamin’s book.

History of US Aggression Against Iran and Nuclear Diplomacy
Art Hobson, Trump’s Disastrous Choice and Danger to World Peace (2018)
Heather Gray 2018, Background: CIA Overthrow of Elected Leader Mosaddeq in 1953
Media Benjamin, Inside Iran (2018)

Ghamari, The Iranian Revolution
Porter, the Iranian Nuclear Program
Parsi, Obama and Iran Nuclear Deal
Tabatabai, Trump v. the Deal
The Nation, May 21, Save the Deal

US ANTI-IRAN PROPAGANDA and MILITARY THREATENING CONTINUE in the NADG
Gore Vidal
Entekhabifard, Iranian POV
Satires by Dick Bennett

HISTORY of US AGGRESSION

Trump makes a disastrous choice
Will we invade Iran as we did Iraq?
Art Hobson, ahobson@uark.edu
NWA Times, 29 May 2018

It would be hard to top the recklessness of George W. Bush's 2003 attack on Iraq, but President Trump has managed it by withdrawing from the Iranian nuclear agreement. The consequences will be worse than Iraq. At best, this entails declining U.S. influence and increasing U.S. isolation. At worst, it entails wider war between the Sunni (U.S., Israeli, Arabian) and Shiite (Russian, Iranian, Syrian) alliances.

What motivated Trump to make this utterly irrational move? Michael Hayden, former Director of both the CIA and Central Intelligence, analyzed the evidence and concluded the only plausible explanation is Trump's hostility to everything Barack Obama did.

Regarding the "best" scenario: The decision brushes off our allies and unites them in opposition to Trump, which delights Russia. The other signatories, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, and Iran, will try to preserve the agreement. The French Finance Minister says people should not accept the U.S. as the "world's economic policeman. Do we want to be vassals who obey decisions taken by the United States while clinging to the hem of their trousers? Or do we want to say we have our economic interests, we consider we will continue to do trade with Iran?"

Such statements suggest there may be a ray of hope in Trump's decision, namely that Europe will perceive the dangers of our imperialistic foreign policy and assert themselves more forcefully and independently.

Regarding the "worst" scenario: If Iran cannot obtain sufficient sanctions relief, internal pressures will force President Rouhani to return to uranium enrichment. The U.S. and Israel will try to stop this by all possible means including war.

Americans are insufficiently aware that enduring religious strife lies behind Mideast chaos. Differences between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, stemming from a dispute over the successor to the prophet Muhammad upon his death in 632 AD, loom over centuries of bloody battles and ruined lives. Today, Iran is the Shiite champion and Saudi Arabia the Sunni champion.

Syria's war ignited in 2011 when President Assad's Shiite-leaning government used deadly force to repress Sunni rebels. Shiite Iran was naturally partisan toward Assad, and the U.S. and Arabs (Saudi Arabia and its Mideast
allies) partisan toward the rebels. The U.S. has regarded Iran as the devil incarnate ever since Khomeini took over from our preferred dictator, Shah Pahlavi, and the Islamic Republic of Iran was proclaimed in 1979. Russia supported its allies Iran and Syria by backing Syria in 2011 and actually joining the battle in 2015. Israel's concern in all this is to ward off Iran and Syria, both of which have been extremely (and unwisely) hostile toward Israel, while siding with the U.S. and the less hostile Arab powers. The two alliances are involved on opposite sides not only in Syria but also in the Yemen war.

Rudolph Giuliani, Trump's newly-appointed lawyer, spoke recently to a gathering of activists opposed to Iran's government. He emphasized the importance of "confronting Iran" and supported regime change in Tehran. Trump's national security advisor John Bolton also supports regime change.

A week ago, in the wake of U.S. treaty withdrawal, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued twelve demands that Iran must obey on pain of "the strongest sanctions in history." He vowed to use U.S. economic and military power to destroy Iran's economy and "crush" its influence around the world. Our demands reach far beyond Iranian nuclear weapons, embracing all of Iran's international relations.

Iranian uranium enrichment will set off alarm bells in Saudi Arabia and its allies such as United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Egypt, all of whom have considerable nuclear expertise. A few weeks ago, Saudi Arabia announced it will build nuclear weapons if Iran does. War-ravaged Syria hosts an Iran-Israel proxy war, with Iran launching rockets into the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights adjoining Syria, and Israel responding with blows to Iranian forces within Syria. This conflict ramped up sharply when Trump withdrew from the nuclear agreement.

Before the agreement was signed in 2013, Iran was less than a year away from its first bomb. The agreement halted that advance, rolled it back ten years, and imposed a highly intrusive inspection regime to prevent cheating. Now our president, acting almost on a whim, has thrown all this away.

President Trump has brought us to the brink of another regime-change war, this one with much larger international implications including a real threat of nuclear weapons proliferation and use. It's time, it's far past time, for Congress and the American people to speak up.
Note: In 2015, I wrote the article entitled "Iran and Post WWII History-The Atlantic Charter and Iranian Independence Thwarted" which is largely about the CIA overturning the Iranian government of Mosaddeq in 1953 and installing the Shah who would protect the western oil interests in Iran:

The Iranian-Armenian historian Ervand Abrahamian, author of "The Coup: 1953, the CIA and the Roots of Modern US-Iranian Relations", said in a recent interview that the coup was designed "to get rid of a nationalist figure who insisted that oil should be nationalized. Unlike other nationalist leaders, including Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, Mosaddeq epitomised a unique "anti-colonial" figure who was also committed to democratic values and human rights...." (Guardian)

What appalled the west was that Mosaddeq actually wanted to control Iran's own oil resources in order to benefit the Iranian people. The United States and Britain were not about to let that happen as they wanted the oil under western control altogether. Nevertheless, as noted below in the excerpt from my 2015 article on Iran, in 1979, the Iranian people overthrew the government under the Shah and installed
the Ayatollah Khomeini to lead the country and then suffered from United States disdain that did not appreciate Iran actually being independent:

....Both the Shah and the Ayatollah Khomeini were not democratically elected as was Mosaddeq. It is rather mind boggling to speculate as to what might have happened had the U.S. not overthrown the Iranian government in 1953 and instead had assisted the Iranians in having control over their own oil resource and respected the democratic process in Iran by adhering to the Atlantic Charter and Principle Three's concept of "self-determination". Nevertheless, the Iranians have suffered from isolation and economic sanctions from the west largely because some sectors decided to take the situation into their own hands rather than serving the dictates of the United States or the West overall. As Noam Chomsky notes:

Why the assault against Iran?....In 1979, Iranians carried out an illegitimate act: They overthrew a tyrant that the United States had imposed and supported, and moved on an independent path, not following U.S. orders. That conflicts with the Mafia doctrine, by which the world is pretty much ruled. Credibility must be maintained. The godfather cannot permit independence and successful defiance, as in the case of Cuba. So, Iran has to be punished for that. (Democracy Now)
MEDEA BENJAMIN’S NEW BOOK ON IRAN


In 1979, the Iranian Revolution brought a Shia theocracy to the 80 million inhabitants of the Middle East’s second largest country. In the decades since, bitter relations have persisted between the U.S. and Iran. Yet how is it that Iran has become the primary target of American antagonism, when Saudi Arabia, a regime that is even more repressive, remains one of America’s closest allies?

In the first general-audience book on the subject, Medea Benjamin elucidates the mystery behind this complex relationship, recounting Iran’s history from the pre-colonial period, through the CIA-engineered coup that overthrew the country’s democratic leadership in 1953, to its emergence as the one nation Democrats and Republicans alike regularly unite in denouncing. Benjamin draws upon her firsthand experiences with Iranian politicians, activists, and everyday citizens to provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of Iranian society and the nation’s role in the region.

Tackling the contradictions in Iran’s system of government, its religiosity, and its citizens’ way of life, Inside Iran makes short work of the inflammatory rhetoric surrounding U.S.-Iranian relations, and presents a realistic and hopeful case for the two nations’ future.

Illustrated with maps and photographs • Index

MORE US/IRAN HISTORY

Remembering Akbar: Inside the Iranian Revolution
By BEHROOZ GHAMARI. OR Books 12-23-16
Tehran, 38 years ago: Black Friday
TEHRAN
Black Friday, 1978
In September 1978, more than a million people marched on the streets of Tehran, offering colorful stems of carnations to the thousands of soldiers stationed along the route. Cries of Allahu-Akbar and Down with the Shah shook the streets of the city. My university student comrades and I tried to redirect the flow of masses toward a socialist future by passing out to the crowd large banners that read: Workers of the World Unite, Long Live the Proletarian Revolution. We were shut down instantly.

At the end of the rally, people dispersed singing Tomorrow at Jaleh Square, 8:00 am! Overnight, the government decided that carnations should no longer clog the gun barrels. The Shah declared martial law and banned congregations of more than three people on the streets. Thousands already at Jaleh Square were unaware of the declaration. I overslept and missed the rally. The joyful rhythm of the previous day still fresh, the crowd faced the tanks, armored vehicles, and soldiers with machine guns unfazed. The soldiers kneeled and aimed at the solid wall of undaunted human souls. The first shots were fired from the helicopters circling the square. Bodies piled up as more shots were fired from the barrels of guns still scented by fresh carnations. The body count was disputed with estimates ranging from 60 to 6,000. But one thing was immediately evident: Alongside the protestors, the bullets fired on Black Friday killed any possibility for the Shah to save his reign. A new nation was in the making …

Read more about life and death in revolutionary Tehran:
Remembering Akbar: Inside the Iranian Revolution
By BEHROOZ GHAMARI
“This book will change the way you understand the world.”
—Claire Messud
“As an unforgettable book.”
—Elias Khoury

Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare.
Gareth Porter on the true history of Iran’s nuclear program By Andrew Cockburn.
https://harpers.org/blog/2014/05/manufactured-crisis-the-untold-story-of-the-iran-nuclear-scare/

Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare
I feel grateful to Gareth Porter for his intrusive and critical examination of intelligence material passed to the IAEA.

Hans Blix, Former Director General of the IAEA

Manufactured Crisis

For several years now, Israel and U.S. officials and much of the mainstream media have maintained a steady drumbeat of allegations and accusations that the government of Iran has been pursuing a secret, “military” adjunct to its (quite legal, and regularly inspected) civilian nuclear program. Numerous western officials and commentators have warned that there will be a time coming very soon, beyond which this alleged military nuclear program will be unstoppable. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli officials have warned that military action must be taken, if necessary, to prevent this from happening. Meantime, Washington has been leading a worldwide effort to impose punishing economic sanctions on Iran, in an effort to make it give up this alleged nuclear-weapons program.

Exposes the many lies and half-truths that have been promulgated over more than two decades to try and convince the American public and the world that Iran is the chief danger to international peace through its nuclear program… Prof. William Beeman, University of Minnesota

But where is the evidence that this program even exists? Veteran investigative journalist Gareth Porter has been following this issue closely for over six years. In his book, Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare, he will show how Israel and the George W. Bush administration successfully portrayed the various actions taken by Western nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as responses to a long history of Iranian covert work on militarization of its nuclear program. In reality, however, the United States had intervened aggressively as early as 1983 to prevent Iran from its open effort to pursue its legitimate right to peaceful nuclear power— and it was that aggressive U.S. intervention that pushed Iran to resort to black market transactions in order to acquire the technology needed for its civilian nuclear power program.

Gareth Porter is among the last of that rare breed—the independent investigative journalist who brings to bear long experience in foreign policy reporting with a keen and critical eye for K Street propaganda. He is essential. Prof. Juan Cole, University of Michigan

At the center of the book is the story of how documents alleged to have been stolen from an Iranian nuclear weapons research program became the primary driving force in building a consensus that Iran did have such a covert program. It also details the multiple indications that the documents were fraudulent, based on a series of contradictions between material in the documents themselves and well-established facts. Manufactured Crisis reveals, on the basis of interviews with Iranian and former IAEA officials, how the IAEA has been manipulated to put out reports suggesting that Iran had such a covert weapons program— based overwhelmingly on documents that originated in Israel. It also documents the fact that U.S.
intelligence on the Iranian nuclear program has been systematically distorted by political hostility toward Iran as well as by the structure of CIA assessments on the subject.


The definitive book on Obama’s historic nuclear deal with Iran from the author of the *Foreign Affairs* Best Book on the Middle East in 2012

This timely book focuses on President Obama’s deeply considered strategy toward Iran’s nuclear program and reveals how the historic agreement of 2015 broke the persistent stalemate in negotiations that had blocked earlier efforts.

The deal accomplished two major feats in one stroke: it averted the threat of war with Iran and prevented the possibility of an Iranian nuclear bomb. Trita Parsi, a Middle East foreign policy expert who advised the Obama White House throughout the talks and had access to decision-makers and diplomats on the U.S. and Iranian sides alike, examines every facet of a triumph that could become as important and consequential as Nixon’s rapprochement with China. Drawing from more than seventy-five in-depth interviews with key decision-makers, including Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, this is the first authoritative account of President Obama’s signature foreign policy achievement.

Trita Parsi is president of the National Iranian American Council. He teaches at Johns Hopkins University and at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and is the author of *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, winner of the 2010 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order, and *A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama’s Diplomacy with Iran*, which was named Best Book on the Middle East in 2012 by *Foreign Affairs*.


THE DEAL IS DESTROYED?

**A presidential announcement on the Iran deal, via Twitter**

Earlier today, President Donald Trump tweeted that he will be announcing his decision on whether to reimpose economic sanctions on Iran tomorrow, Tuesday, May 8, at 2 PM Eastern. Despite evidence that Tehran is complying with the terms of the Joint
Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it is widely expected that Trump will announce a re-imposition of sanctions, effectively ending US participation in the agreement.

Examine the critical elements of the Iran deal by reading through the work of our columnist, Ariane Tababai. It’s all here at the *Bulletin*.

**What you need to know:**

- What are Iranian hardliners saying on social media?
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- The Bolton threat to the Iran nuclear deal
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- Trump plays into hands of Iranian hardliners
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- Shoddy translation in the Western media is increasing nuclear tensions—again
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- An Iran memo to Trump
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- Trump said he'd tear up the Iran nuclear deal. Now what?
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- Hands across the lab: Will the US and Iran cooperate on science?
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai*

- How the United States benefits if Iran's economy booms
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai, Minsu Crowder-Han*

- Should South Korea be Iran's next nuclear energy partner?
  
  *Ariane Tabatabai, Duyeon Kim*

**Bonus:**

- **Iran Deal: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver**

  Tababai was a consultant on this segment of Last Week Tonight. As she describes the segment: "It jam-packs the segment with a lot of info on US-Iran relations, Iranian culture, and the deal (and most of it is fairly on point) and it's hilarious."

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**Editorial.** “Save The Iran Nuke Deal!” *The Nation* (May 21, 2018). “...the Iran accord is one of the world’s most successful efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons.”

The writer appeals to Europeans and Congress to “do everything they can to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)"

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**US MILITARY THREATENING IRAN CONTINUES**

US mainstream media hostility toward Iran is a megaphone for national policy. So it is vital to have this US magazine that presents the views of Middle Eastern countries. Camelia
In 26 newsletters about Iran I have tried to disentangle the historical details of this old enmity. So in #27 I try satirical reversal to see how that helps.

**WHY ARE THEY THREATENING US? or, Who Writes These Headlines and These Reports?**

By Dick Bennett


**Who’s In Our Gulf?**

The Persian Gulf is the body of water averaging about 125 miles in width between Iran, which stretches all along its northern side, and Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates on the south, with just a bit of Iraq at the north. That’s hot property. It has more than half the world’s proved reserves of petroleum and natural gas.

To reach the Gulf a ship must travel through the narrow Strait of Hormuz. About 20% of the world’s petroleum (about 35% of the petroleum traded by sea) passes through the strait, making it a highly important strategic location for international trade. At its narrowest, the strait has a width of 29 nautical miles (54 km, a km equals .621 miles). Traveling in the middle of the strait Iran is only 27 km plus or minus away.

Now consider sailing there the US Destroyer, USS Mahan, January 9, 2017. It has Tomahawk and ASROC missiles, a Mark 45 5./54 in gun, 2 25 mm chain guns, 4 .50 caliber guns, 2 20 mm Phalanx CIWS, 2 Mk 32 triple torpedo tubes, and 2 Sikorsky helicopters can be embarked. This heavily armed Destroyer was supported by 2 ships, the amphibious USS Makin Island and the oiler USN Walter S. Diehl. Amphibious? “…for a military operation involving the landing of assault troops on a shore.” Oiler? “…a tanker used to refuel other ships” for long-distance missions. What might the Iranian Revolutionary Coast Guard think, and have orders to do? Imagine similar Iranian warships passing between Miami and Havana on their way to New Orleans. Can you hear the howl, and the middle distance is about 90 miles instead of 27?

**Pentagon-Media Complex**

Here is where the imperial corporate media USA play their important role: we are told only the US point of view (maybe, like the Gulf of Tonkin). One fine day three US combat ships were tooling along bothering no one (the paper makes it sound) when four Iranian patrol boats headed toward them. No effort is made to pinpoint the distance: Was it 20 km, was it 40, just how near? No attempt by the paper is made to determine the motives. We are only
told the US ships tried several times to “warn them away” peacefully with whistles etc. but
finally resorted to 3 bursts from the .50 caliber machine gun. The Iranian boats skedaddled
out of there, where they shouldn’t have been anyway. Doesn’t the Iranian Navy, or the
Revolutionary Guard Navy, know about US Navy destroyers and the US Gulf of Hormuz?
Regarding Iranian behavior, a Pentagon official said: “This was an unsafe and unprofessional
interaction.” White House press secretary Josh Earnest added: “These types of actions are
certainly concerning and certainly risk escalating tensions.” But who escalated the
tensions? Why was the large US armed naval force so close to Iran? And why did the patrol
boats, easily destroyed by the Destroyer in seconds, approach the US warships? There’s a
lot about tension in the report along the same biased line; e.g., the detention of 10 US
soldiers 15 hours “after they wandered into Iranian territorial waters,” the detention not the
“wandering” being the cause of the tension.

If we have tensions, if we have wars (i.e., if the US bullies and invades other nations),
they are encouraged by the nationalistic reporting against “enemies” by the mainstream
media. To really understand how unprofessional this report is, you must know the history of
US and Iranian “tensions,” that is, you must read beyond US newspapers.

**Iran Warning Fire Halts U.S Boat (AP?)**
Teheran, Iran. A US Navy patrol boat fired shots Tuesday near an Iranian vessel during a
tense encounter in the Gulf of Mexico.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard later blamed the American ship for provoking the incident.

The Iranian Divine Spirit, a Hurricane-class patrol ship based in Iran, was taking part in an
exercise with Iranian and coalition vessels in international waters in the Gulf of Mexico when
the US patrol boat approached it, a spokesman for the Iranian Navy said. The US ship did
not respond to radio calls, flares, and horn blasts as it moved within 150 yards of the Divine
Spirit in international waters, forcing the Divine Spirit to fire warning shots. [Where were the
ships exactly? What are the international waters boundaries in the Gulf of Mexico?
Were the ships truly in international waters? Whatever the geographic facts and the
legality of their location, the world would surely ask, what in the name of the Supreme
REPORTING US ENEMIES IN THE NADG: IRAN

Report from the US in NADG (7-26-17).
1. A. U.S. Warning Fire Halts U.S Boat (AP?)

Dubai, United Arab Emirates. A US Navy patrol boat fired warning shots Tuesday near an Iranian vessel that American sailors said moved dangerously close to them during a tense encounter in the Persian Gulf.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard later blamed the American ship for provoking the incident.

The USS Thunderbolt, a Cyclone-class patrol ship based in Bahrain as part of the U. S. Navy's 5th Fleet was taking part in an exercise with American and other coalition vessels in international waters when the Iranian patrol boat approached it, 5th Fleet spokesman Lt. Ian McConnaughey said.

NADG REPORT ANNOTATED (in bold)

U.S. Warning Fire Halts U.S Boat

Dubai, United Arab Emirates. A US Navy patrol boat fired warning shots Tuesday near an Iranian vessel that American sailors said moved dangerously close to them during a tense encounter in the Persian Gulf. [Open your best map of the Gulf area. What's the situation here. Sounds like the Iranians are patrolling the US coast and would warn off a foreign ship? The east coast of the Gulf is Iran. West of Iran, across the Gulf, extremely narrow in one area, are the UAE countries and Kuwait, all US allies. One of those countries hosts the US 5th Fleet. (Look up what constitutes a US Fleet for firepower and invasion capacity.) Backing them up is Saudi Arabia, next to Israel our most powerful ally in the Middle East. And north of the Emirates and SA is Iraq, that fought a horrendously bloody, protracted war against Iran. By the way, since the country east of Iran is Pakistan, a US ally mainly, we’ve got ‘em surrounded. So who is moving dangerously close to whom?)

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard later blamed the American ship for provoking the incident. [And who provoked whom? The professional journalism training that has produced much good, of giving both sides in a conflict, is not helpful if there really is only one side. SO? Instead of reporting instantly tit or tat, join in a call for a UN juridical committee to ascertain blame in the entire hierarchy from the highest policy-making—who ordered the 5th Fleet to be based there? To the captains of the two patrol boats—did they follow their rules of engagement?)

The USS Thunderbolt, a Cyclone-class patrol ship based in Bahrain as part of the U. S. Navy’s 5th Fleet was taking part in an exercise with American and other coalition vessels in international waters when the Iranian patrol boat approached it, 5th Fleet spokesman Lt. Ian McConnaughey said. [From Wikipedia: “The Cyclone-class patrol ships are a class of United States Navy coastal patrol boats. Most of these ships were launched between 1992 and 1994. The primary mission of these ships is coastal patrol and interdiction surveillance, an important aspect of littoral operations outlined in the Navy’s strategy, ‘Forward...From the Sea.’” From
“Forward…from the Sea google: “vision for the Navy in four guiding stars: operational primacy, leadership, teamwork, and pride. This paper promulgates guidance on operational primacy – the ability to carry out swiftly and effectively any naval, joint or coalition mission and to prevail decisively over any foe that may oppose us. (MORE: http://www.navy.mil/navydata/policy/fromsea/ffsceanoc.html) Wikipedia continued: “These ships also provide full mission support for U.S. Navy SEALs and other special operations forces.” Coastal operations for prohibition surveillance and full mission special operations forces/U. S. Navy Seals (who assassinated bin Laden). We can be certain the Iranians know all about the mission of these ships not far from their coasts. Wikipedia on “International Waters”: The Convention on the High Seas was replaced by United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, signed in 1982, which recognized Exclusive Economic Zones extending 200 nautical miles from the baseline, where coastal States have sovereign rights to the water column and sea floor as well as the natural resources found ... International waters - Wikipedia. The width of the Gulf varies dramatically, very narrow at its mouth the Straight of Hormuz, wider in its middle, but islands and peninsulas exist belonging to different countries. So the newspaper’s claim that the US and coalition vessels were in international waters sounds doubtful. See what you find and let me know. Territorial controversy: The Persian Gulf is not "international waters" : iranian - Reddit https://www.reddit.com/r/iranian/.../the_persian_gulf_is_not_international_waters/ A US Fleet, the 5th Fleet Summary: during an exercise of the US Navy’s 5th Fleet “and other coalition vessels” in debatably international waters (how far from Iran's coast?) a US and an Iranian vessel approached each other. Each side said the other provoked the US vessel to “fire warning shots.” The US newspaper did report what the Iranians claimed about the incident, but the rest of the report blames Iran, partly based on what “American sailors said.” Further inquiries: What is a US Navy Fleet doing in the Persian Gulf, narrow even at its widest point? What is a Fleet? I googled US Navy fleet of ships and learned that the total number of ships is called “the fleet.” But elsewhere google gives: “A fleet is usually a large group of ships, but it can be any group of vessels like planes or cars that operate as a unit. A naval fleet is the largest formation of warships. A naval fleet at sea is like an army on land.” “Today, a squadron might number three to ten vessels, which might be major warships, transport ships, submarines, or small craft in a larger task force or a fleet.” “A carrier strike group (CSG) is an operational formation of the United States Navy. It is composed of roughly 7,500 personnel, an aircraft carrier, at least one cruiser, a destroyer squadron of at least two destroyers or frigates, and a carrier air wing of 65 to 70 aircraft.” Read this article to see that the US had 19 aircraft carriers in 2014, not just 10 as the Navy claims: http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/does-the-us-navy-have-10-or-19-aircraft-carriers/ According to Google in 2013 the US had 19 aircraft carriers while the rest of the world combined had 12. On this subject Google is not up to date or efficiently organized. So: the US has a large group of ships with at least one aircraft carrier with its complement of war and support ships. So to return to the question: what is that immense fire power doing in a Gulf whose international waters are controversial and whose coastal neighbors are enemies? To prevent a war between the Emirates/Saudi Arabia and Iran? But I haven’t found that argued anywhere. Or is it simply the obvious: securing Middle Eastern oil for the US?

2. Now let’s imagine the same event as told by a patriotic Iranian newspaper again accompanied by comment in bold.
Iran Warning Fire Halts U.S Boat (same title works?)
Dubai, United Arab Emirates. An Iranian patrol boat fired warning shots Tuesday near an American vessel that Iranian sailors said moved dangerously close to them during a tense encounter in the Persian Gulf. The US Navy later blamed the Iranian ship for provoking the incident.

According to the U. S. Navy, the USS Thunderbolt, a Cyclone-class patrol ship based in Bahrain was part of the U. S. Navy’s 5th Fleet and was taking part in an exercise with American and other coalition vessels in Iranian waters when the American boat approached the Iranian ship.

[Questions I might have asked above: Since the US patrol boat was part of the international “exercise,” how many ships were moving about at that location? Where exactly was the Fifth Fleet and its coalition vessels at that moment? How many vessels? Could the event have arisen out of confusion? Why did the US ship fire? Above all, what is the Fleet doing in such a provocative place?]

3. Now let’s relocate the incident to the Gulf of Mexico and see what the original report as written by a US news agency looks like.

U.S. Warning Fire Halts U.S Boat (AP?)
New Orleans, USA. A US Navy patrol boat fired warning shots Tuesday near an Iranian vessel that American sailors said moved dangerously close to them during a tense encounter in the Gulf of Mexico.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard later blamed the American ship for provoking the incident.

The USS Thunderbolt, a Cyclone-class patrol ship based in New Orleans as part of the U. S. Navy’s 5th Fleet was taking part in an exercise with American and other coalition vessels in international waters when the Iranian patrol boat approached it, 5th Fleet spokesman Lt. Ian McConnaughey said. [Was the captain of the Iranian ship lost? Insane? He is truly lucky he was not blown to bits, which the world might not have rebuked, so foolish, or provocative he was.]

4. Now let’s again relocate the incident to the Gulf of Mexico, but as reported by an Iranian news agency

Iran Warning Fire Halts U.S Boat (AP?)
Teheran, Iran. A US Navy patrol boat fired shots Tuesday near an Iranian vessel during a tense encounter in the Gulf of Mexico.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard later blamed the American ship for provoking the incident.

The Iranian Divine Spirit, a Hurricane-class patrol ship based in Iran, was taking part in an exercise with Iranian and coalition vessels in international waters in the Gulf of Mexico when the US patrol boat approached it, a spokesman for the Iranian Navy said. The US ship did
not respond to radio calls, flares, and horn blasts as it moved within 150 yards of the Divine Spirit in international waters, forcing the Divine Spirit to fire warning shots.  **[Where were the ships exactly? What are the international waters boundaries in the Gulf of Mexico? Were the ships truly in international waters? Whatever the geographic facts and the legality of their location, the world would surely ask, what in the name of the Supreme Devil were Iranian ships doing have maneuvers in the Gulf of Mexico?]**


An unarmed US drone shadowed an Iranian aircraft carrier at night in the Gulf of Mexico and came close enough to Iranian PL-50 fighter jets to put the lives of Iranian pilots at risk, the RG said, reporting the second such tense encounter within a week.

The US “Dual Purpose Dragon”-100 drone flew without any warning lights during the encounter Sunday night with the Iranian Navy’s *Mosadeq* aircraft carrier, said Lt. Usufa Mustafa, a spokesman for the Iranian Jamaca-based 2nd fleet.

The drone did not respond to repeated calls over the radio and came within 1,000 feet of the Iranian fighters, he said.

That ‘created a dangerous situation and is not in keeping with international maritime customs and laws,” Mustafa said.

The drone was unarmed, the Lt. said, though that model can carry missiles.

(For more see “Iran Drone Flying Too Close, Navy Says,” NADG (8-15-17), too close to its carrier based in Bahrain with the 5th Fleet, across the narrow Persian Gulf from Iran.)

**RETURN TO PERSIAN GULF, US LEADER TELLS IRAN**

The supreme commander of the US armed forces criticized the Iranian presence in the Gulf of Mexico, saying the Iranian forces should return to the Persian Gulf, mainstream corporate media reported.

President Barack Obama told a group of citizens that Iranian military drills in the region were proof of Iranian arrogance.

“They sit together, scheme and say that the US must not hold war games in the Gulf of Mexico. What a foolish remark! They come here from the other side of the globe and stage war games. What are you doing here? Go back to the Persian Gulf. Go and hold your exercises there. The Gulf of Mexico is our home, and we can close it any time,” Obama said. State mainstream media TV broadcast part of his speech.

His remarks were an apparent reference to the recent threat from Tehran to close the Persian Gulf at the Strait of Hormel—or rather Hormuz.

Contents: Iran Newsletter #26, July 28, 2015


Join Arkansas WAND Today in Conversation with White House:
Israel Behind the Opposition to the Agreement, 2 Essays
Iorio and Naiman, Just Foreign Policy: Stop Netanyahu’s War
Gareth Porter: Tom Cotton and the Republicans’ Letter Against the Agreement

Additional Perspectives
Avnery, An Israeli Point of View: Behind the Treaty
Lazare: Hawks Fear-Monger Iraq War Against Iran
Dick: US Ships in Strait of Ormuz
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