

## A New PM for a New War?

By [Outside the Gates](#)

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Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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The rhetoric against Iran has been building over the last few weeks. As the latest report from the IAEA on Iran's nuclear enrichment was due to be delivered to the UN Security Council on Wed 23.05.07, the Guardian [front page](#) on Tues 22.05.07 was nothing short of a propaganda piece for an attack on Iran. Nearly all of the report was quotes from unnamed USA officials in Baghdad and Washington claiming Iran was responsible for the attacks on US and British forces in Iraq, as if an illegal invasion and occupation couldn't possibly generate an indigenous Iraqi resistance. The response to the article was quick and sharp from [Media Workers Against War](#) , [Media Lens](#) on the Guardian's [comment is free](#) . The journalistic integrity of Simon Tisdall has been severely compromised in requesting the interview and presenting it as an advert for another war.

Ironically, if headlined as a world exclusive and an exposé of the USA propaganda campaign to win support for attacking Iran this summer, the body of the report would not have needed a single word changed and could have received high praise and probably won prizes.

This dubious story is just part of the recent push by the Anglo/American alliance to ratchet up the level of tension about and in the Middle East.

We had the Marines and Sailors being captured in disputed waters by Iran which resulted in a humiliation for Blair and desperate Naval PR spin to divert the story onto the Sailors/Marines being paid by the press to bare all after their return.

The same day as the IAEA reported to the Security Council, two US carrier attack groups, USS John C. Stennis and USS Nimitz and an amphibious assault group led by USS Bonhomme Richard sailed through the Straits of Hormus in broad daylight, conducting maneuvers as they went as a show of force to Iran. 85 warplanes are present on each aircraft carrier and the support ships include at least 4 guided-missile cruisers and destroyers. They regularly sail in and out of the Straits of Hormus during the night but this was the first during daylight hours. Obviously done to try intimidating Iran and gain information about Iranian responses, as well as let the world know the tension is still being ratcheted up. India Daily are reporting [another two carrier strike](#) groups heading for the region, the USS Carl Vinson sailing from Singapore to the Gulf and the USS Theodore Roosevelt heading across the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, possibly to join a Nato naval force already stationed off the coast of Lebanon.

Which brings me to the latest assault on the Palestinians. In the north of Lebanon a Palestinian refugee camp, Nahr el-Bared has come under a sustained assault by the Lebanese Army trying to liquidate a Sunni Muslim group called Fatah al-Islam. According to residents of the camp as reported by [Franklin Lamb from Tripoli](#), Fatah al-Islam comprises people from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Algeria, Iraq and Tunisia etc etc and they have no

noticeable local support. It seems the group was set up in September or October last year with money from Saudi Arabia and/or Saad Hariri to help counter the support Shia Hezbollah and their allies gained in defeating the attempted Israeli invasion of Lebanon in July/Aug 2006. [Seymour Hersh](#) even thinks indirect USA money is funding them. What a surprise. The USA is also [flying in munitions](#) for the Siniora government and with Hezbollah supporting the Lebanese army's assault on Fatah al-Islam, these arms may very well go to Hariri's militia, the Lebanese Internal Security Apparatus.

The official state religion of Saudi Arabia is the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam. The most intolerant sect of all and which gave Saudi rich-brat Osama bin Laden his fanatical religious ideas and the money to put them into practise against the Soviets in Afghanistan through the 1980s. It makes you wonder, what with all these al Qaida type groups being from the wahhabist/salafist sect, whether Saudi Arabia is running a mercenary army of jihadists who are, in all probability ignorant of who pays them and gives them guns. If the Saudi's are running an army of jihadists it was assembled during the wars against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, the dismembering of Yugoslavia and the last 4 years of carnage in the abattoir that is Iraq.

Seeing as [government intelligence services](#) around the world are being privatised this, my speculative army, could even be run by a private company and bring in good returns if made available for commercial hire.

How about Prince Bandar as possible business partner, currently head of Saudi Arabia's national security council, former ambassador to the USA and Bush family friend? Bandar has been implicated in the arms company [BAE bribery allegations](#) . He is alleged to have received £1bn from BAE, paid at £30m a month for 10 years and approved by the Ministry of Defence, for helping smooth the £43bn Al-Yamamah arms deal signed in 1985. This is the same arms deal that was being investigated by the Fraud Squad and which was scuppered by an [intervention from blair](#). Does this stink or not?

In April bombs were set off in [Algeria](#) and Morocco, countries whose nationals seem to be involved with Fatah al-Islam. The bombings in Algeria have been claimed by a group called 'al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb', another franchise for brand al Qaida. The Maghreb is a geographic area covering north west Africa and includes the countries of Morocco, Algeria, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia. The membership of any terrorist group will be in inverse proportion to the geographic area they claim to represent. In other words the more grandiose in their claims, the smaller the membership. I would go so far as to say that the only people who believed they were acting for Allah when bombing the Algerian prime minister's office were the suicide bombers themselves, certainly not their handlers.

Are the previous few paragraphs flights of fancy or a plausible interpretation? Consider this. During the 1970s there were a lot of terrorist groups in Europe planting bombs and killing innocents. The Red Brigade in Italy, the Red Army Faction in Germany were created in response to the progressive political developments of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Then they claimed they were of the secular left but in reality were run by the covert apparatus of the state, a tactical adaptation by [Operation Gladio](#) . In Italy for example, the PCI - the Italian Communist Party - were a mass party with near 2 million members and close to realising their electoral power. Stuart Christie, acquitted defendant at the Angry Brigade trial in 1972, had this to say in an [interview 3 years](#) ago about how European terror groups ended up, "Their objective is to spread terror among the wider population through a strategy of tension by the random slaughter of innocent bystanders." That is the 'strategy of

fear' at its most naked being conducted then in Europe and now in Iraq.

Through all this time, innocent, poverty stricken Palestinians were and are being slaughtered. The vulnerability of the Palestinians in the refugee camps leaves them open to being exploited for US geopolitical ends and which seems to be the case now with Fatah al-Islam. For them to gain a presence in the Nahr el-Bared camp would require Palestinian collaborators, which is probably the case in all refugee camps. The West Bank and Gaza are definitely riddled with [criminals](#) and others who are collaborating with the occupation. Trish Schuh at U.N. Observer ([via Global Research](#)) has compiled a detailed report of Israeli involvement in running Arab mercenary assassination units throughout Lebanon.

Israel has stepped up its military incursions and murder of Palestinians in Gaza, using as excuse a few ineffective Qassam missiles hitting Israel from northern Gaza. The family of a leading member of Hamas was killed when their home was attacked from the air. Israel has arrested, or kidnapped a third of the elected members of the Palestinian Authority. They have joined the other 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli gaols. This is at a time when the Palestinians are having difficulties maintaining their unity and are fighting each other. Thus the Israeli actions at such a time can be interpreted as an attempt to continue dividing the Palestinians so as to rule them as Untermenschen or have genocide done.

Former Sephardi chief rabbi in Israel, Mordechai Eliyahu, with the support of his son Shmuel Eliyahu, rabbi of Safed, has called for [a million Palestinians to be killed](#) by the carpet bombing of Gaza to stop the Qassam rockets. The 'final solution' thought appropriate by Jews for Palestinians. Are they Nazis? They are undoubtedly Jewish Supremacists, Zionists.

The whole world is opposed to what Israel is doing and they can only do it with the say so of the USA. Whenever raised at the UN, the USA uses its veto to block criticism or action, protecting Israel and letting them act with impunity. It is erroneous to think that the USA foreign policy is determined by Israel, that the invasion of Iraq or the threatened assault on Iran is at the behest of Israel. True, Israel wanted war against Iraq and is frothing at the bit for one with Iran, but it is the USA who will decide if it happens. Even James Petras has gone down this line of arguing Israel determines USA policy in the Middle East but I am pleased to see that his position is being [robustly rebutted](#) .

The USA power elite are not the dupes! It would be us if we did not recognise the leading role of the USA elite in the globalisation of capitalism, that they are classic imperialists with client elites in other states who will use unbridled force to achieve their masters ends. Britain is in this position.

Somewhere in this labyrinth I call my mind a bell is ringing - 'creative chaos'. A phrase very much loved by the neocons. Though that exact phrase is not used in the following quote from Michael Ledeen, neocon acolyte of Mussolini, he uses the truer, less gentle "creative destruction" instead, I think you'll understand where I'm coming from;

"Creative destruction is our middle name, both within our own society and abroad. We tear down the old order every day, from business to science, literature, art, architecture, and cinema to politics and the law. Our enemies have always hated this whirlwind of energy and creativity, which menaces their traditions (whatever they may be) and shames them for their inability to keep pace. Seeing America undo traditional societies, they fear us, for they do not wish to be undone. They cannot feel secure so long as we are there, for our very

existence—our existence, not our politics—threatens their legitimacy. They must attack us in order to survive, just as we must destroy them to advance our historic mission.”

(Quote from Ledeen’s book, ‘The War Against the Terror Masters’, via an [American Conservative](#) article by the aptly named John Laughland.)

Franklin Lamb reported on [30th May](#) , that a USA airbase is being considered for the north of Lebanon at Kaleiaat (El Qlaiaat), a couple of miles up the coast from Nahr al-Bared refugee camp. He doesn’t think this would mean the end of the refugee camp but that the Palestinians would still suffer by not being employed on construction or maintenance, because of Lebanese law proscribing them from employment. They would be left to fester in poverty. I think this might be a bit naive. Lebanon is a [coastal corridor](#) , which if extended north to the Turkish border would seal off Syria from the Mediterranean. This is one of the objectives in the USA’s plans for further war in the region. An airbase at Kaleiaat would greatly enhance their ability to achieve such an objective. Any population of Palestinians within a few miles would be seen as a serious threat to the security of any future airbase. Hezbollah has made it clear that both the Lebanese army and the Palestinian camps are ‘red lines’ not to be crossed but how far that will deter the Siniora bloc from trying to accommodate US plans for an airbase while NATO forces are based in the north of Lebanon and at sea ‘quarantining’ the coast, is anyone’s guess.

There is also something else going on here which might forestall the above scenario from unfolding. Last year reports were coming out of Moscow about the expansion of two Syrian ports, [Latakia and Tartus](#) to take the biggest ships from the Russian Black Sea Fleet and in the process establish a permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean. This would ensure the Russians not being bottled up in the Black Sea if Turkey closed the Bosphorus. In the case of the port of Tartus it would be an upgrading from a materiel and technical supply depot that the Soviets/Russians have had since the 1970s. The port developments are part of a defence agreement Russia has signed with Syria which includes enhanced missile defences, the modernisation of 1,000 Syrian T-72 tanks, the purchase of 2 submarines and some further upgrading of the Syrian air forces. Quite a package in all.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline has just been opened bringing oil west from the Caspian Sea to the Turkish Mediterranean coast and controlled by anglo/american oil companies. An undersea pipeline from Ceyhan to Haifa has been muted though it would be preferable to lay a pipeline overland via Lebanon. One of the reasons of a USA airbase at Kaleiaat is as a defence of any pipeline, as well as being a counter to the Russian presence in Syria.

Russia is the ultimate prize the USA has been seeking since at least 1867 when they bought Alaska from Tzar Alexander II. The landmass of Russia, strategically straddling and dominating Eurasia from the north, contains some of the richest mineral deposits and natural assets in the world; oil, gas, coal, diamonds, timber etc etc. The control of Russian nuclear assets is a priority for the USA. Russia is today the only country in the world capable of inflicting ‘unsustainable damage’ on the USA mainland, that and its geographic position, make it The strategic threat to US imperial interests.

Some of the events that have led me to think this are; The imposition of ‘shock therapy’ in the 1990s as the means to transition to a ‘free market economy’, which opened up Russia to US gangster capitalism; the expansion of NATO and the positioning of NATO anti-missile missiles in Poland and the Czech Republic despite previous agreements not to; the wars of dismemberment of Yugoslavia denying Russia port access on the Adriatic; the colour

coordinated 'revolutions' on Russia's borders in Georgia, Ukraine etc funded by the USA through such fronts as the National Endowment for Democracy; There are many more.

Everything the USA has done since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been to try and constrict Russia's international participation, pinning it back into its borders weak and poor. If control of Middle East oil was to be secured it required the neutralising of Russia as an independent centre of capitalist accumulation. Or that was the thinking in Washington and London before they came up against the facts on the ground in Iraq and the intransigence of a people resisting occupation.

The invasion of Iraq has increased the price of oil and gas, strengthening Russia (once [Yukos](#) had been broken), to the extent that Putin feels confident enough to draw a line in the sand with his speech and Q&A session at the Munich Security Conference on [10th Feb](#) this year. Read it - before accepting media analysis about Putin's recent statement on targetting Europe if the USA's anti-missile missile systems are deployed in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Since February Putin has got a bit jittery. In the last week he implied that Europe would be targeted if the anti-missile missiles were deployed. As an intervention in the lead up to the G8 it was a misjudgement. Bush had already put himself at odds with members of the G8 when he spoke about climate change and undermined all present negotiations and agreements. Putin would have done better to delay any announcement and instead looked to the vocal, large and active opposition to the missiles in the [Czech](#) Republic (running at 68%) and Poland. Or the struggles around the world opposing USA military bases like at [Vicenza, Italy](#) , or [Eloy Alfaro, Ecuador](#) . But then Putin's leading a country whose rich power elite see growth from exploiting finite resources and cheap labour as the normal and correct state of things. Where human beings are seen as naught but commodity to acquire or sell as they wish, with no reference to morality. Much like the USA and Britain. And which could help explain Putin's offer of a [joint US/Russian missile shield](#) based in Azerbaijan.

On Sunday 03.06.07, the Observer carried a comment piece by Eric Hobsbawm arguing that the age of empire is over, never to arise from the dead, but that a new global political architecture has not yet been found. (Its not on the Observer web site unfortunately but seems to be his recent contribution to the Hay-on-Wye [book festival](#) ). He's right again of course, but it makes for a very dangerous time as Hobsbawm's historical understanding is not that of the US power elite. They are still utilising the imperialist template for their strategic thinking and have no alternative, no plan B. This was amply demonstrated during the recent announcement by Bush on climate change. Not in what he said - there was no change there - but what the words were on the backdrop behind him; 'American Global Leadership Campaign'. Fuck You Bush!

Will Brown - an unelected leader and PM in waiting - heed Hobsbawm's understanding of where we are? Probably not, after all as Chancellor he found the funds for building the charnel house that is now Iraq. His recent announcements about the 'war on terror', or the 'long war', and his committment to extending the length of time people can be detained without charge, indicate a willingness to carry on the same, committing war crimes abroad and constricting civil rights at home. Is he a new PM for a new war or has he the courage to say no to [Cheney's lust](#) for nuking Iran?

So, according to Hobsbawm we are in an interregnum where the old is dead but won't lie down and the new cannot yet be born.

There is no blueprint for the future, no map of how to get there. Never was. All we have is the experience of history and a vision for tomorrow where conflicts are argued and resolved through the mobilisation of words and peoples imaginations, not war.

And what is the experience of history? The poor, the meek never inherit the Earth. They have to shed the meekness – be bold and confident in their ethics, morality, intellect and institutions – and take action for our future. This is happening and will not be suppressed.

All over the world people are doing just this, are taking action of one sort or another, struggling on all fronts to arrange the funeral of this old, past its sell-by-date system. By all fronts I mean all fronts and in all arenas. From elections to labour disputes and strikes, occupations and peace camps, finding new political instruments and formations. Some are winning ugly like the resistance in Iraq, others are winning beautiful with [Bolivar](#) .

Too keep upto date on what is happening in Rostock while the G8 is in progress, it is really worthwhile visiting [Focus on the Global South](#) for reports. Walden Bello, executive direct of Focus on the Global South, analysing the state of play with the World Social Forum is a [must read](#) for those attending the [US Social Forum in Atlanta](#) from June 27 to July 1.

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