

# Bush-Cheney Israel Disinformation Campaign to Justify an Attack on Iran

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

## Campaign's Overall Design and Objectives

The Bush administration and Israeli government appear to be operating a joint disinformation campaign, whose objective is to establish a media based alternative reality from which to accuse Syria/Iran of developing nuclear weapons with help from North Korea, by using a real event combined with planted stories establishing a defining narrative. This accusation in turn is augmented with stories about Iranian sponsored "Special Groups killing US troops in Iraq" and purported naval incidents the Persian Gulf, creating self-reinforcing, media based crisis.

The immediate purpose of this disinformation campaign is apparently to help justify the planned US attack on a wide range of Iranian industrial and military targets. And, as in the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the objective is to swiftly inflict substantial damage to the national infrastructure of Iran, followed by an abrupt cessation of attacks and a call for a cease-fire to prevent substantial Iranian retaliation. Again, as in the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the US likely will resist calls for a cessation of the attacks until a significant portion of the Iranian target set has been addressed, then it will accept calls for a cease-fire and demand Iran do the same.

Any subsequent attacks by Iran would probably be characterized by the US as Iranian aggression, further justifying US follow-up attacks on remaining Iranian assets as defensive measures. The transparent duplicity of such US actions and claims is not a problem because US corporate media is prepared to report repeatedly the administration's claims with little or no criticism or mention of alternative assessments. In other words, subjecting its audience to blatant propaganda masquerading as journalism, which is effective as it is because of US corporate media's quantitative monopoly on information provided the public.

As far as can be determined, no credible or even plausible evidence for any of these claims has been presented by the Bush administration, let alone by any independent verification of such claims. Instead, in the pattern similar to the disinformation campaign before the invasion of Iraq, questions about these claims, when raised at all, are ignored or "answered" with repeated or additional claims. Essentially this disinformation campaign, as all such campaigns, is an elaborate set of lies to deceive an enemy, in this case the United States Congress and the American people, in pursuit of Bush administration secret policy objectives for the benefit of a foreign government.

## Campaign's Origin

The origins of this disinformation campaign was the the Bush administration's appreciation

in the late summer of 2007 that the [National Intelligence Estimate \(NIE\) subsequently released in November 2007](#) would undermine its attempts to claim Iran was developing nuclear weapons, the then primary justification for an attack on Iran. When it became clear to the Bush administration that the intelligence community would issue the 11/7/07 NIE, completely undermining the administration's claims of Iranian nuclear weapons development, they apparently decided, instead of accepting this judgment or objecting to it within official channels, that an alternative foundation needed to be established for its planned attack on Iran. This alternative would bypass not only the US intelligence community's collective assessments, but also the judgments of the United States' Joint Chiefs of Staff military command.

Essentially, the Bush administration, in cooperation with a foreign government, Israel, decided to bypass the intelligence community as well as the military commands of the United States, in order undertake attacks by US military forces on a foreign nation, Iran, by deliberately ignoring and undermining the judgments of authorities charged by law with informing the US Congress about such data so it can make sound judgments in exercise of its US Constitutional authority over matters of war and peace. Apparently the Bush administration hopes for a fait accompli after attacks on Iran, leaving the next administration with a region-wide tar baby, with Israel the only remaining "friend" in the region, otherwise populated with outright enemies or alienated former allies.

In addition, a likely last minute Israel-Palestinian peace deal negotiated with the unelected Fatah based faction, in which Israel would be granted costly long term aid and security assurances, in exchange for Israeli commitments of limited value and voracity. With Israel positioned to attempt an alliance with the Kurds upon the expected partition of Iraq, following an inevitable US withdrawal. Again, as with the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration's planning is front loaded, focused on the mechanics of military operations or manipulating public and official opinion, with little or no thought given to what happens next, let alone second or third order consequences, except the general intention to take maximum political advantage of any resulting crisis.

On the face of it, some elements of the Bush administration's undertaking appear to be acts of treason, by giving aid and comfort to an enemy of the United States, in as much as it aided Israel to act in its own interests and without regard for, or to the detriment of, the manifest interests of the United States; however, we defer such judgments to another, more appropriate venue, and only pursue our limited assessment of the administration's actions with regard to their immediate objectives.

#### First Overt Act

The first known overt act in pursuit of this effort, besides Israel's attack on Syria, was a letter Bush wrote to the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, as reported by the [BBC on December 6, 2007](#), wherein Bush asked the Korean leader to reveal any assistance to others in the development of nuclear weapons. While a matter of speculation, this letter combined with other demands by the US government, were meant to pressure the North Korean government into making accusations against Syrian and Iran, in exchange for concessions in the form of released impounded funds and oil shipments promised as by part of the US-North Korean agreement on its weapons development program. According to the [NYTimes Dec 15, 2007 report](#), Bush wrote a letter to the North Korean leader demanding, among other things, he reveal who he have helped with his nuclear technology, as specified in the nuclear declaration or so-called "come clean" section of the US-North Korean agreement.

Because the usual glacial movements of North Korea's foreign policy were incompatible with Bush administration's Iranian timetable, attempts were made to pressure North Korea to give in sooner to US demands by the end of the year, but as [U.S. Will Hold North Korea to Nuclear Commitments](#) by Reuters 01/03/08 reports, these efforts failed thus far. Instead, North Korea made a forthright statement, [North Korea Says Earlier Disclosure Was Enough](#) by The New York Times 01/05/08, which repudiated such claims. Since this was contrary to Bush administration objectives, it was apparently largely ignored by US corporate media. Pressure continues on North Korea to make such admissions.

## Change of Policy

Overall, it appears the sudden US agreement with North Korea, after years of the usual "Bush diplomacy" whereby he refuses to speak to the other side until they concede every major point of contention, was an attempt to [clear the decks](#) for attacks against Iran. Among the most informed and insightful observers of national security affairs, [Seymour M. Hersh, in a video interview at The New Yorker](#), suggested that a US agreement with North Korea would be among the clearest signs of US preparation for an attack on Iran. He further discusses, in an interview with Al Jazeera on Feb 7, 2008, US intentions and the likelihood [Cheney may have overrode US Joint Chiefs of Staff objections to the attack](#).

As part of the administration's disinformation campaign, Israel attacked a Syrian site, which was later linked to North Korea through a set of stories released over time to give the impression of information being slowly revealed over time, hoping to establish "facts" more firmly than making accusations at the time of the attack on Syria.

## US Corporate Media's Role in the Nuclear Weapons Development Story

It appears that certain media outlets were a party to the disinformation campaign, in that they misled their readers and others with stories clearly designed to establish the impression that North Korea was helping Syria, and likely Iran, to develop a nuclear program, to be conveniently confused in the public's mind with the far more costly and complex development of nuclear weapons. Among those noted, Harretz, the Washington Post and New York Times appear to have been willing conduits of this disinformation campaign, since it would strain all credulity to believe they themselves were deceived, especially since no effort was made to report on other observers who question the validity of these claims:

[Israelis 'blew apart Syrian nuclear cache'](#), Sunday Times, Sept 16, 2007

[Israel, U.S. Shared Data On Suspected Nuclear Site](#), Washington Post, Sept 21, 2007

[Israel Admits To Sept. Air Attack In Syria](#), CBS News Oct 2, 2007

[Israel Struck Syrian Nuclear Project, Analysts Say](#), NYTimes Oct 14, 2007

[Photographs Said to Show Israeli Target Inside Syria](#), Washington Post Oct 24, 2007

[North Koreans said killed in IAF strike on alleged Syria nuclear reactor site](#), Harretz Staff and Reuters, Apr 28, 2008

It should be noted: All of these ginned-up, hand ringing stories about programs "to develop

the capability; to learn technologies; to establish potentials for securing; etc.,” not once mention that Israel is armed with several hundred nuclear warheads, some of which are aboard submarines capable of attacking Europe, Russia and the US.

#### A New Casus Belli: “Iran Is Killing US Troops”

The Bush administration has augmented and subordinated the nuclear issue and naval incidents as casus belli to the “Iran is killing US troops” propaganda offensive, which immersed with the invention of the so-called “Special Groups” by the US military command, [first mentioned by the US Military Command in Iraq on July 2, 2007](#). They took on new life at the end of March 2008, as [reported by Agence France-Presse \(AFP\) on March 26, 2008](#), when military spokesman Major General Kevin Bergner, as part of the US Military’s effort to “document” Iranian sponsored operations in Iraq, revealed these [“Iranian-supported Special Group criminals”](#) were apparently and suddenly everywhere.

Within a month, hundreds of stories in the [US corporate media](#) reported all about these “Special Groups”, almost without exception identifying them as Iranian trained and fielded. The [NYTimes reported by April 24, 2008](#) that, “73 percent of fatal and other harmful attacks on American troops in the past year were caused by roadside bombs planted by so-called ‘special groups.’” according to “Senior officers in the American division that secures the capital.” As far as can be determined no credible or even plausible evidence for such groups has been presented by the US Military command in Iraq. Clearly, weapons stamped with Iranian manufacturing labels, while subject to counterfeiting, would mean little, even if genuine, in as much as such small arms are trafficked throughout the Middle East and indicate nothing about the actions of the government of Iran. Instead, in a pattern similar to the run up to the invasion of Iraq, questions about these claims, are ignored or met with additional claims.

By the time General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker testified before the US Congress in early April, the [“special groups” were an established element in the alternative reality maintained by official Washington and US corporate media](#). In addition, the ever compliant Congress allowed the two to testify for just a single day before the Senate and another day before the House committees in a mockery of oversight, during which not much was made of the question as to whether these claims about “special groups”, even if true, legally justified attacking Iran under international law.

It is highly likely arrests of “Iranian agents” and weapons store seizures of “Iranian weapons” will continue, along with “counter infiltration” operations along the Syrian and Iranian borders.

#### The New York Times Particularly Duplicitous

The New York Times in particular, after its public vows to do better following exposure of its reporter Judith Miller, who made a significant contribution the “Weapons of Mass Destruction” disinformation campaign run out of Cheney’s office prior to the invasion of Iraq that ultimately proved to be totally false, now seems to have slipped back into its old habit of blatant pro-Israel coverage and disinformation, while objecting in its editorial page to the very policies it advances in its reporting, making its practices especially duplicitous and irresponsible, given its undisputed influence both on official Washington and the rest of US corporate media.

In another example, a [NYTimes Apr 26, 2008 article “Questions Linger on Scope of Iran’s Threat in Iraq”](#) that nominally purports to question the US claims about Iranian/Iraqi “Special Groups” and Iranian involvement in training and arming fighters in Iraq; in fact, reinforces such claims using “directly or indirectly quoted unnamed officials an astounding 30 times,” according to an insightful analysis of the article by Jeff Huber [“When Did Iran Start Beating Its Wife Again?”](#). The importance of the “Special Groups” claims is clear in that the Bush administration has shifted part of justification for a war with Iran to the charge that “Iran is kill US troops in Iraq”, adding to this to its “warnings” about naval incidents in Persian Gulf and nuclear weapons development as Casus Belli options.

Recent encounters involving US and Iranian naval vessels show a evolution toward a much more aggressive and manipulative posture in the Bush administration’s characterization of these events. The widely reported [incident between US and Iranian vessels](#) on January 6, 2008 in the [Strait of Hormuz](#) was actually the third such recent encounter. The [first two encounters occurred in December 2007](#), during one of which on December 19, 2007 the USS Whidbey Island fired warning shots toward an approaching Iranian vessel, causing the Iranian vessel to alter course. The first two encounters passed unreported at the time and were largely routine for the area of operations.

However, the third encounter on January 6, 2008 was not only characterized as a far more grave “incident” by official Washington, accompanied by [reports by official US sources of threats made against the US vessels](#), based on [video and voice transmission](#) “evidence” released by the Pentagon to vast coverage by US corporate media. Examination of the voice transmission recordings indicated the actual segment containing the only threat was of doubtful authenticity; and, a later release of an [Iranian video](#) of the same incident indicated the Pentagon had mischaracterized its own video, revealing another blatant disinformation effort, but received little coverage in US corporate media.

Another two naval incidents have been hyped by US corporate media, one in the Persian Gulf where a US military chartered cargo vessel, Western Venture, [fired warning shots at approaching unidentified small boats without known injuries or damage](#). While the media attention added to regional tensions and increased oil prices, the incident was much like the other [incident at the entrance to Suez Canal](#), except in that case a boat borne local vendor was shot to death by personnel aboard a US military chartered vessel Global Patriot. Needless to say the dead vendor was of little note in US corporate media.

Finally, the Accusations and Warnings

Perhaps the most transparent effort to link the alleged Syrian and North Korean reactors is [the Apr 25, 2008 report in the BBC](#), which included pictures provided the CIA that “said to have been obtained by Israel – showed striking similarities between the Syrian facility and the North Korean reactor at Yongbyon, the US said.” The report goes on to note: “The CIA briefing and statement coincides with the end of a two-day meeting between US and North Korean officials on Pyongyang’s nuclear programme, which both sides say have gone well – fuelling speculation that a deal may be imminent.” What this “deal” is remains to be seen, but bribes paid to a foreign government (North Korea) in exchange for accusations against another foreign government (Syria), in order to justify claims against a third foreign government (Iran) are hardly the stuff upon which grave policy decisions (going to war with Iran) should be made. Unless your objective is to lead the US into yet another war no matter what the facts actually are, as the Bush administration and Israel appear to be trying to do.



Finally, we have Bush himself taking the money shot in the Israeli press, with a truly bizarre parlaying of the accusations against Syria into a warning to Iran: [Bush: Revealing details of attack on Syrian site was message to Iran](#), in a Haaretz Staff and Reuters, Apr 29, 2008, stating that "U.S. President George W. Bush said yesterday he released U.S. intelligence about the nuclear facility that Israel bombed in Syria in September so as to put pressure on North Korea and send a message to Iran that it could not hide its own nuclear program." Apart from the fact that a nuclear reactor is not proof of a weapons program in Syria, Iran is not Syria, any more than Saddam Hussein had anything to do with the 9/11 attacks on the US.

These Bush "warnings" have become a mainstay of US corporate media, in which often baseless threats against others are portrayed as "last, best efforts" to change alleged behavior before action is reluctantly taken, after giving the ever-preferable "diplomacy" a chance. The most blatant example of this is the number of times Saddam Hussein was "warned" about "weapons of mass destruction" and we were all warned about not letting the "smoking gun being the mushroom cloud" as well as warning about his final chances to "come clean." The added virtue of "warnings" is they contain an embedded assertion that the warned party knows full well the truth of the accusation as does the one issuing the warning, as well implying a reasonableness in that the target need only comply to avoid getting what they would otherwise deserve.

Should North Korea finally agree, at likely unknown cost, to "come clean" and mention help to Syria or Iran, such bribery is likely to be no more credible than confessions of tortured prisoners in the Bush administration's special prisons, whether they be "Iranian Agents" or "Terrorists" turned over to US authorities as part of the US's far flung bounty programs. After all, we have all become prisoners to the attendant lunacies of the Bush administration and US corporate media's alternative reality, in which new "warnings" based on disinformation lurk: hair-trigger "facts" poised to "provoke" the US into "defending" itself by attacking Iran, including nuclear program/weapons development; "Special Groups" killing US troops in Iraq; and, hostile naval incidents. By the time the attack on Iran comes, the US corporate media will be asking why it took the US so long to "react."

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