

Dangerous Crossroads: US Sponsored War Games

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In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) has announced the conduct of major war games under Vigilant Shield 2008 (VS-08).

Vigilant Shield 2008 (15 to 20 October, 2007) is designed to deal with a “terrorist” or “natural disaster” scenario in the United States. The operation will be coordinated in a joint endeavor by the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security.

Yet, VS-08, which includes a massive deployment of the US Air Force resembles a war-time air scenario rather than an anti-terrorist drill. The VS-08 war games extend over the entire North American shelf. Canadian territory is also involved through Canada’s participation in NORAD. (See [Nazemroaya, October 2007](#))

These war games are being conducted at an important historical crossroads, amidst mounting US pressures and threats to actually declare a “real war” on Iran.

VS-08 is predicated on the doctrine of preemptive warfare, with a view to protecting the Homeland. The war games are coordinated with anti-terrorist drills directed against presumed Islamic terrorists.

Moreover, the announcement by NORTHCOM of the VS-08 war games-anti-terror drills coincided with a declaration by the Bush administration in early September that military action against Iran is being contemplated at the highest echelons of the US government and Military:

“President George W Bush and his inner circle are taking steps to place America on the path to war with Iran, .. Pentagon planners have developed a list of up to 2,000 bombing targets in Iran, ... Pentagon and CIA officers say they believe that the White House has begun a carefully calibrated programme of escalation that could lead to a military showdown with Iran. (Quoted in The Sunday Telegraph, 16 September 2007).

VS-08 is a large scale military exercise to be conducted over North America and the Northern Pacific Ocean, extending westwards towards the Far East borders of Russia and China:

“USNORTHCOM’s primary exercise venues for VS-08 include locations in Oregon, Arizona and a cooperative venue with USPACOM in the Territory of Guam. NORAD’s aerospace detection and defense events will take place across all the exercise venues, to exercise the ability to mobilize resources for aerospace defense, aerospace control, maritime warning, and coordination of

air operations in a disaster area.” ([PNC](#), October 2007)

Both the war games under VS-08 as well as the domestic antiterrorist drills involve the participation of Canada, Britain and Australia:

“VS-08 and National Level Exercise 1-08 will provide local, state, tribal, interagency, Department of Defense, and non-governmental organizations and agencies involved in homeland security and homeland defense the opportunity to participate in a full range of exercise scenarios that will better prepare participants to prevent and respond to national crises. The participating organizations will conduct a multi-layered, civilian-led response to a national crisis.”([See NORTHCOM Fact Sheet](#)).

Pacific Shield 2007

Vigilant Shield 2008 will be preceded by another set of exercises organized by Japan. The Tokyo government will host a multinational Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Maritime Interdiction Exercise “Pacific Shield 07”(PS-07) in the eastern sea area off Izu Oshima, and at the Ports of Yokosuka and Yokohama (13-15 October, (See the [Japanese government communique](#)). The stated objective of the PS 07 exercises is to “prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)”. Australia, France, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK, and the US will be participating in ‘Pacific Shield 07’.

“Linked Exercises”

The administration is talking about “linked exercises”, where war scenarios are conducted simultaneously and in close coordination with civilian anti-terrorist drills. This central concept –which underlies the “Global War on Terrorism”– has a direct bearing on the conduct of the US led war in the Middle East. At the same time, the process of “domestic security” has become entrenched and integrated into military planning.

The ‘linked exercises” provide an environment which favors the militarization of civilian institutions. They also impart the military with a further opportunity to interfere in domestic civilian law enforcement and judicial functions.

The conduct of the anti-terrorist exercise is intended to justify the need to retaliate against an illusive outside enemy (Al Qaeda), even if the US is not attacked.

But there are indications that the administration has envisaged from the standpoint of military planning, for several years now, a scenario of a second major terrorist attack on America . According to Pentagon officials referring to a classified military document:

“Another [second 911] attack could create both a justification and an opportunity that is lacking today to retaliate against some known targets [Iran, Syria], according to current and former defense officials familiar with the plan.” (WP 23 April 2006).

The above Pentagon statement suggests that a “Second 911” attack characterised by a “mass casualty producing event” is part of military doctrine and planning. A real “false flag” attack or even the threat of a terrorist attack could be used as a justification to wage war on

Iran.

In the month following the 2005 7/7 London bombings, Vice President Dick Cheney is reported to have instructed USSTRATCOM to draw up a contingency plan “to be employed in response to another 9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States”. Implied in the contingency plan is the certainty that Iran would be behind a Second 9/11.

Targeting Russia and China

VS-8 is based on a scenario of confrontation with Russia and China. The Bush administration has accused Tehran of supporting Islamic terrorism, while also pointing to the fact that Iran in fact has the support of both China and Russia.

While the contents of VS-08 have not been released, last year’s Vigilant Shield exercise (Vigilant Shield 07), which simulated the outbreak of a major war, contemplated four hypothetical enemies: Ruebek (Russia), Churya (China), Irmingham (Iran) and Nemazee (North Korea).

In last year’s briefing documents of the Vigilant Shield 07 war games, the following scenario was contemplated by participants:

- “•Nemazee continues to develop nuclear and missile capabilities
- Southwest Asian country of Irmingham intent on uranium enrichment program
- Western countries and United States seeking U.N. assistance to halt Irmingham’s enrichment program
- Eurasian country of Ruebek attempts to mediate Irmingham crisis by offering nuclear oversight while secretly supporting enrichment program
- Asian country of Churya will become concerned at increasing level of Ruebek-U.S. hostility”

(quoted by [William Arkin, Washington Post, October 2006](#))

The outcome of VS-07 was a limited attack by Ruebek and Nemazee on the United States.

“Minus 1 Day:

- Ruebek Expels US Mission

• *Phase 2 / Execution: 10 – 14 Dec 06*

- Pre-Attack I & W
- Imminent Terrorist Attack on Pentagon Suggests Pentagon COOP [continuity of operations plan]
- Nemazee Conducts 2 x ICBM Combat Launches Against United States
- Ruebek Conducts Limited Strategic Attack on United States”

quoted by [William Arkin, Washington Post, October 2006](#))

TOPOFF 4: Selective Propaganda directed at “Top Officials”

This year’s VS-08 exercise combines the VS-08 hypothetical war scenario over the North American shelf with the conduct of major domestic anti-terrorist drills under TOPOFF 4.

The latter is a large scale anti-terror exercise for “top officials”. It includes the participation of senior decision makers from federal, State and municipal governments, law enforcement, nongovernmental bodies as well as representatives from the business community.

According to Denis Shrader, Deputy DHS Administrator in testimony to the US Congress (October 3):

“The exercise will be executed with the participation of all appropriate Cabinet-level secretaries or their deputies, and will include the activation of all necessary operations centers to accurately simulate a truly national response to these major terrorist incidents. This will include the utilization of all five elements of the National Operations Center and the FEMA Region IX and X Regional Response Coordination Centers. In addition, the FEMA Emergency Response Teams and Federal Incident Response Support Teams as well as DHS Situational Awareness Teams will activate in each of the venues and will simulate the establishment of a Joint Field Office in accordance with the latest National Response Framework guidance.”

This year’s TOPOFF 4 exercises involves setting off fake radiological dispersal devices (RDD) or “dirty bombs” in Oregon, Arizona and the US Pacific island territory of Guam. According to Northern Command:

“The T4 FSE, based on National Planning Scenario – 11 (NPS-11), begins as terrorists, who have been planning attacks in Oregon, Arizona, and the U.S. Territory of Guam successfully bring radioactive material into the United States. The first of three coordinated attacks occurs in Guam, with the simulated detonation of a Radiological Dispersal Device (RDD), or “dirty bomb,” causing casualties and widespread contamination in a populous area. Similar attacks occur in the hours that follow in Portland and Phoenix. A RDD is not the same as a nuclear attack. It is a conventional explosive that, upon detonation, releases radioactive material into the surrounding area. Although it does not cause the type of catastrophic damage associated with a nuclear detonation, there are severe rescue, health, and long-term decontamination concerns associated with a RDD.”

TOPOFF 4 will involve the participation of some 15,000 federal, state, territorial and local officials in what is described as “a full-scale response to a multi-faceted terrorist threat”. Canada, Australia and the UK will participate in TOPOFF. Observers from some 30 countries have also been invited.

“It will ‘accurately simulate a truly national response to these major terrorist incidents’ by emergency response teams, medical units, police forces and top government officials who will have to make difficult decisions to save lives.”
(quoted by AFP, 4 October 2007)

TOPOFF is a propaganda operation intended for at top decision makers. The objective is to build a consensus among key decision makers that America is threatened by Islamic terrorists, using an improvised nuclear device.

These terrorists are, according to recent statements, supported by Tehran. The presumption is that the Islamic terrorists, rather than the US, UK or Israel, have the required military capabilities and constitute a real nuclear threat.

These various anti-terrorist scenarios are intended to build a consensus among key top officials in the US and its coalition partners that the terrorist threat is not only real but the terrorists would be attacking America in a “Second 911” as part of a broader process of military confrontation, in which a number of enemy countries including Ruebek, Churya and Irmingham would be involved.

We are not, however, dealing with a classical media disinformation campaign. While the TOPOFF exercise has been casually mentioned in press reports, it is not the object of extensive media coverage. In fact very few people are aware of these exercises.

With regard to TOPOFF, the consensus building process is “internal”, it does not pertain to the public at large. The disinformation campaign is intended for key decision-makers within these various governmental and nongovernmental bodies. It includes more than 10,000 participants in important decision-making positions (federal and State officials, law enforcement, fire departments, hospitals, etc), who may be called to act in the case of an emergency situation. These individuals in turn have a mandate to impose the “Global War on Terrorism” consensus within their respective organizations, -i.e. with their co-workers and colleagues, as well as with the people working under their direct supervision.

In other words, this consensus building process reaches out to tens of thousands of people in positions of authority. The antiterrorist agenda and exercises thus become a “talking point” within numerous governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

In turn, the holding of these antiterrorist exercises supports the National Security doctrine of “preemptive war”, -i.e. that America has to legitimate right to self defense by intervening in foreign lands including Iran and that America must defend itself against terrorists.

It also sustains the myth of WMD in the hands of terrorists, being used against America, when in fact the US is the largest producer of WMD, with a defense budget of more than 450 billion dollars a year.

The objective is to sustain the war and national security agenda -and of course the possibility of martial law- within the governmental, nongovernmental and corporate business sectors. Ultimately, the objective is develop across the land, an unequivocal acceptance by key officials (and of their coworkers and subordinates), from the federal to the local level, for an emergency situation, where civil liberties and the rights of citizens would be suspended.



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