

Escalation of US Iran military planning part of six-year Administration push

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



The escalation of US military planning on Iran is only the latest chess move in a six-year push within the Bush Administration to attack Iran, a RAW STORY investigation has found.

While Iran was named a part of President George W. Bush's "axis of evil" in 2002, efforts to ignite a confrontation with Iran date back long before the post-9/11 war on terror. Presently, the Administration is trumpeting claims that Iran is closer to a nuclear weapon than the CIA's own analysis shows and positing Iranian influence in Iraq's insurgency, but efforts to destabilize Iran have been conducted covertly for years, often using members of Congress or non-government actors in a way reminiscent of the 1980s Iran-Contra scandal.

The motivations for an Iran strike were laid out as far back as 1992. In classified [defense planning guidance](#) – written for then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney by then-Pentagon staffers I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, World Bank Chief Paul Wolfowitz, and ambassador-nominee to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad – Cheney's aides called for the United States to assume the position of lone superpower and act preemptively to prevent the emergence of even regional competitors. The draft document was leaked to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and caused an uproar among Democrats and many in George H. W. Bush's Administration.

In September 2000, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) issued a report titled "[Rebuilding America's Defenses](#)," which espoused similar positions to the 1992 draft and became the basis for the Bush-Cheney Administration's foreign policy. Libby and Wolfowitz were among the participants in this new report; Cheney, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other prominent figures in the Bush administration were PNAC members.

"The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security," the report read. "While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein. . . . We cannot allow North Korea, Iran, Iraq or similar states to undermine American leadership, intimidate American allies or threaten the American homeland itself."

This approach became [official US military policy](#) during the current Bush Administration. It was starkly on display yesterday when Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns [noted](#) a second aircraft carrier strike force headed for the Persian Gulf, saying, "The Middle East isn't a region to be dominated by Iran. The Gulf isn't a body of water to be controlled by Iran. That's why we've seen the United States station two carrier battle groups

in the region.”

The Structure

Almost immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, Iran became a focal point of discussion among senior Administration officials. As early as December 2001, then-Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and the leadership of the Defense Department, including Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, allegedly authorized a series of meetings between Defense Department officials and Iranian agents abroad.

The first of these meetings took place in Rome with Pentagon Iran analyst, Larry Franklin, Middle East expert Harold Rhode, and prominent neoconservative Michael Ledeen. Ledeen, who held no official government position, introduced the US officials to Iran-Contra arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar. According to both Ghorbanifar and Ledeen, the topic on the table was Iran. Ledeen told RAW STORY [last year](#) the discussion concerned allegations that Iranian forces were killing US soldiers in Afghanistan, but [Ghorbanifar has claimed](#) the conversation focused on regime change.

In January 2002, evidence that Iran was enriching uranium began to appear via credible intelligence and satellite imagery. Despite this revelation – and despite having called Iran part of the Axis of Evil in his State of the Union that year – President Bush continued to focus on Iraq. Perhaps for that reason, throughout 2002 the strongest pressure for regime change flowed through alternative channels.

In early 2002, Ledeen formed the Coalition for Democracy in Iran, along with Morris Amitay, the former executive director of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

In August 2002, Larry Franklin [began passing](#) classified information involving United States policy towards Iran to two AIPAC employees and an Israeli diplomat. Franklin pleaded guilty to the charges in October 2005, explaining that he had been hoping to force the US to take a harder line with Iran, but AIPAC and Israel have continued to deny them.

At the same time, another group’s political representatives begin a corollary effort to influence domestic political discourse. In August 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran – a front for a militant terrorist organization called Mujahedin-E-Khalq (MEK) – held a press conference in Washington and stated that Iran had a secret nuclear facility at Natanz, due for completion in 2003.

[Late that summer](#), the Pentagon’s Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz expanded its Northern Gulf Affairs Office, renamed it the Office of Special Plans (OSP), and placed it under the direction of Abram Shulsky, a contributor to the 2000 PNAC report.

Most know the Office of Special Plans as a rogue Administration faction determined to find intelligence to support the Iraq War. But that wasn’t its only task.

According to [an article in The Forward](#) in May 2003, “A budding coalition of conservative hawks, Jewish organizations and Iranian monarchists is pressing the White House to step up American efforts to bring about regime change in Iran. . . . Two sources [say] Iran expert Michael Rubin is now working for the Pentagon’s ‘special plans’ office, a small unit set up to gather intelligence on Iraq, but apparently also working on Iran. Previously a researcher at the Washington Institute for Near East policy, Rubin has vocally advocated regime change in

Tehran.”

Dark Actors/Covert Activities

While the Iraq war was publicly founded upon questionable sources, much of the buildup to Iran has been entirely covert, using non-government assets and foreign instruments of influence to conduct disinformation campaigns, plant intelligence and commit acts of violence via proxy groups.

A few weeks prior to the Iraq invasion, in February 2003, Iran acknowledged that it was building a nuclear facility at Natanz, saying that the facility was aimed at providing domestic energy. However, allegations that Iran was developing a nuclear weapons program would become louder in the course of 2003 and continue unabated over the next three years.

That spring, then-Congressman Curt Weldon (R-PA) opened a channel on Iran with former Iranian Minister Fereidoun Mahdavi, a secretary for Ghorbanifar. Both Weldon and Ledeen were told a strikingly similar story concerning a cross border plot between Iran and Iraq in which uranium had been removed from Iraq and taken into Iran by Iranian agents. The CIA investigated the allegations but found them spurious. Weldon took his complaints about the matter to Rumsfeld, who [pressured the CIA](#) to investigate a second time, with the same result.

In May 2003, with pressure for regime change intensifying within the US, Iran made efforts to negotiate a peaceful resolution with the United States. [According to Lawrence Wilkerson](#), then-Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, these efforts were sabotaged by Vice President Cheney.

“The secret cabal got what it wanted: no negotiations with Tehran,” Wilkerson said.

The US was already looking increasingly to rogue methodology, including support for the Iranian terrorist group MEK. Before the US invasion, MEK forces within Iraq had supported Saddam Hussein in exchange for safe harbor. Despite this, when they were captured by the US military, they were disarmed of only their major weapons and are allowed to keep their smaller arms. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld [hoped to use them](#) as a special ops team in Iran, while then-National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and State Department officials argued against it. By 2005, the MEK would begin training with US forces in Iraq and carrying out [bombings and assassinations](#) in Iran, although it is unclear if the bombings were in any way approved by the US military.

The Pressure is On: 2004 – 2006

For a variety of reasons – ranging from the explosion of the insurgency in Iraq following the high point of “Mission Accomplished” to Iran’s willingness to admit IAEA inspectors – the drumbeat for regime change died down over the summer of 2003. In October 2003, with Iran accepting even tougher inspections, Larry Franklin told his Israeli contact that work on the US policy towards Iran which they had been tracking seemed to have stopped.

Yet by the autumn of 2004, pressure for confrontation with Iran had resumed, with President Bush [telling Fox News](#) that the US would never allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. By then, the [Pentagon had been directed](#) to have a viable military option for Iran in place by June 2005.

This phase of pressure was marked by increased activity directed at Congress. An “Iran Freedom Support Act” was introduced in the House and Senate in January and February of 2005. Neoconservatives and individuals linked to the defense contracting industry formed an Iran Policy Committee, and in April and May presented briefings in support of MEK before the newly-created Iran Human Rights and Democracy Caucus of the House of Representatives.

In March 2006, administration action became more overt. The State Department created an Office of Iranian Affairs, while the Pentagon created an [Iranian Directorate](#) that had much in common with the earlier Office of Special Plans. According to Seymour Hersh, [covert US operations](#) within Iran in preparation for a possible air attack also began at this time and included Kurds and other Iranian minority groups.

By setting up the Iranian Directorate within the Pentagon and running covert operations through the military rather than the CIA, the administration was able to avoid both Congressional oversight and interference from then-Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, who [has been vocally skeptical](#) about using force against Iran. The White House also successfully stalled the release of a fresh National Intelligence Estimate on Iran, which could reflect the [CIA’s conclusion](#) that there is no evidence of an Iranian nuclear weapons program.

In sum, the Bush Administration seems to have concluded that Iran is guilty until proven innocent and continues to maintain that the Persian Gulf belongs to Americans – not to Persians – setting the stage for a potential military strike.

September 2000

The Project for the New American Century issues “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” as a blueprint for a potential Bush administration.

This paper states, “The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.”

It further lays out as an objective that *“We cannot allow North Korea, Iran, Iraq or similar states to undermine American leadership, intimidate American allies or threaten the American homeland itself.”*

“The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” released by the administration on September 20, 2001, closely echoes this PNAC document.

(Members of PNAC who then joined the Bush administration include Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Richard Armitage.)

[PNAC](#) (pdf)
[Cooperative Research](#)
[Information Clearing House](#)

December 9, 2001

Michael Ledeen, consulting for the Department of Defense, along with DOD employees [Harold Rhode](#) and [Larry Franklin](#), meet in Rome with [Iran Contra](#) arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar, and other Iranians.

Ledeen, who is only present for one of the meetings, has told Raw Story that the meetings were authorized by then-Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and then-National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. He also stated that the meetings had to do with Iranian support for the opposition to US forces in Afghanistan.

According to Ghorbanifar, however, the discussions involved regime change in Iran.

[Raw Story](#)

[Raw Story](#)

[Newsweek](#)

early 2002

Michael Ledeen and [Morris Amitay](#) form the [Coalition for Democracy in Iran](#), which is supported by former CIA director [James Woolsey](#), and leading neo-conservative [Frank Gaffney](#), among others.

[Third World Traveler](#)

January 29, 2002

Bush's State of the Union Address includes Iraq, Iran, and North Korea in the "Axis of Evil."

[White House](#)

February 2, 2002

Time Magazine reports that Iran may have been helping Taliban and al-Qaeda members escape from Afghanistan. Iran denies it.

[Time Magazine](#)

[CNN](#)

February 26, 2002

[Frm. Amb. Joseph Wilson](#) visits Niger. According to a 2004 report by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *"The intelligence report also said that Niger's former Minister for Energy and Mines [redacted]. Mai Manga, stated that there were no sales outside of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) channels since the mid-1980s. He knew of no contracts signed between Niger and any rogue states for the sale of uranium.*

He said that an Iranian delegation was interested in purchasing 400 tons of yellowcake from Niger in 1998, but said that no contract was ever signed with Iran."

[Washington Note](#)

[Senate Report](#) (pdf)

[Raw Story](#)

[Raw Story](#)

The Focus Intensifies on Iran's Nuclear Program, August 2002 - February 2003

August 5, 2002

[Steve Rosen](#) of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee ([AIPAC](#)) asks DOD employee A (possibly Doug Feith, then Undersecretary of Defense Policy, or Harold Rhode) for the name of someone with expertise on Iran and is directed to [Larry Franklin](#).

On August 15, Franklin begins a series of meetings with [Naor Gilon](#), then political officer at the Israeli Embassy.

By about that time, Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley were aware that the FBI was carrying out a counterintelligence investigation of AIPAC

[Franklin indictment](#)
[Washington Post](#)

mid-August 2002

The National Council of Resistance of Iran (which considers itself an Iranian government in exile, and of which Mujahedin-E-Khalq or for short MEK, is the dominant member) holds a press conference in Washington and states that Iran has a secret nuclear facility at Natanz, due for completion in 2003.

[Global Security](#)
[Council of Resistance of Iran v. State Department](#)

October 2002 – January 2003

Iran conducting uranium laser enrichment experiments. (Note that this does not mean a WMD program.)

[Global Security](#)

February 10, 2003

Iran acknowledges that it is building a nuclear energy facility at Natanz as part of a nuclear energy program.

[Global Security](#)

February 12, 2003

Larry Franklin and DoD employee B meet with Rosen and [Kieth Weissman](#) of AIPAC for the first of a series of meetings concerning US policy towards Iran.

[Franklin indictment](#)

February 21, 2003

[IAEA](#) inspectors (including El Baradei) visit Iran. They are shocked to find that the design of the centrifuges is of Pakistani origin. Pakistan is an ally of the United States in the War on Terror.

The Push for Action at the Onset of the Iraq War, February - June 2003

February 24, 2003

Neocon analyst [Yossef Bodansky](#) claims:

"The Iranian clerical leaders have decided to actively undermine the US ability to consolidate a post-Saddam government in Baghdad. Iran has already begun implementing this policy, deploying proxy Shi'ite forces into Iraqi Kurdistan and modifying the deployment of Iran's own Armed Forces."

[Internet Archive](#) (Global Information System)

March 7, 2003

[Rep. Curt Weldon](#) (R-PA) first hears about "Ali" (former Iranian minister Fereidoun Mahdavi), an associate of Manucher Ghorbanifar. Some have suggested that the introductions are made via Michael Ledeen, although Ledeen and Weldon's spokesperson have both denied the allegations.

[Raw Story](#)
[American Prospect](#)

March 20, 2003

Invasion of Iraq.

[CNN](#)

April 15, 2003

The US Army permits the Mujahedin-E-Khalq (MEK) in Iraq — militant Islamo-Maoist opponents of the government in Iran, officially considered terrorists by the US, and formerly supporters of Saddam's regime — to keep their weapons

[Raw Story](#)

<!--[if !supportEmptyParas]-><!--[endif]->

April 25, 2003

Curt Weldon meets with an "Ali" in Paris. Ali claims that Iranian intelligence had stolen enriched uranium from Iraq prior to the start of the war, smuggling it into Iran. But the CIA determines this to be a fabrication.

Michael Ledeen has recounted a very similar story, which he also passed along to US intelligence. He denies Ghorbanifar is his source on this.

[Raw Story](#)

April 30, 2003

Michael Ledeen tells the [JINSA](#) Policy Forum it's time to focus on Iran

[JINSA](#)

May 6, 2003

Forum on “The Future of Iran” sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute, Hudson Institute, and [Foundation for the Defense of Democracies](#) and chaired by [Meyrav Wurmser](#). Participants include Michael Ledeen and Morris Amitay.

Wurmser’s husband, [David](#), is the Middle East Advisor to VP Cheney.

[AEI](#)

May 10, 2003

The MEK accept a formal cease-fire and are placed under a sort of protective custody by US special forces in Iraq

[Global Security](#)

May 12, 2003

Editorial by Neocon William Kristol in the *Weekly Standard* calls for regime change in Iran.

[Weekly Standard](#)

May 16, 2003

US officials say the May 12 bombings in Saudi Arabia were carried out by al-Qaeda operatives who have taken refuge in Iran

[CBS](#)

May 17, 2003

The *Forward* reports that Neocons and warhawks in the administration have convinced Bush, Cheney, and the Pentagon of the need for regime change in Iran but the State Department remains opposed.

It also states that the infamous [Office of Special Plans](#) is now gathering intelligence on Iran.

[Information Clearing House](#)

May 20, 2003

Neocon Daniel Pipes promotes support for the MEK

[Daniel Pipes](#)

June 3, 2003

Larry Franklin and Naor Gilon meet to discuss a person (who may be [Judith Miller](#)), her thoughts on Iran’s nuclear program, and certain charity efforts, which may refer to Miller’s work with Rhode and [Ahmed Chalabi](#) on the Iraqi Jewish Archive.

[Franklin indictment](#)

June 2003

(probably between June 6 and 12)

Rhode and Ghorbanifar meet in Paris. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, the purpose of the meeting was to undermine any deal for Iran to hand over several high-ranking al-Qaeda members in exchange for the US either handing over MEK members and/or cutting off its support of MEK. More generally, the intent is to worsen US-Iran relations.

[Juan Cole](#)
[Washington](#)
[Monthly](#)

June 15, 2003

George Bush endorses pro-democracy student demonstrations in Iran that have been going on for the previous five days.

[PBS](#)

June 16, 2003

El Baradei calls on Iran to allow more intrusive inspections. Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and accuses the US of stirring up the IAEA

[PBS](#)

June 17, 2003

French police arrest 165 MEK members at their headquarters near Paris. This comes in the context of both the ongoing student demonstrations and a conflict in the US administration between the Pentagon and the State Department over whether to form an alliance with MEK against the Iranian government.

[Eurasianet](#)
[Raw Story](#)

The IAEA Defuses the Situation, July - October 2003

July 6, 2003

Joseph Wilson op-ed in the *New York Times*, "What I Didn't Find in Africa."

[Common Dreams](#)

July 10-13, 2003

The IAEA holds technical discussions with Iran and asks for full transparency

[Global Security](#)

July 14, 2003

CIA covert officer, Valerie Plame Wilson is outed by Robert Novak in alleged retaliation for her husband's criticism of the Bush administration.

Plame-Wilson was working on an Iran project at the time of her outing. Later, in their book, *Hubris* – Michael Isikoff and David Corn – we would report that she was also working on Iraq WMD as well.

[Raw Story](#)

[Crooks and Liars](#) (MSNBC video)

[The Nation](#)

July 2003

Israel warns the United States of a heightened insurgency to come in Iraq with support from Iran, but the US rejects Israeli urgings to seal the border. When the insurgency explodes in early August, the Israelis conclude the US is unwilling to confront Iran.

[New Yorker](#)

July 28, 2003

Iran is reported to be holding several top al-Qaeda members

[Monitor](#)

August 9-12, 2003

IAEA team of technical experts in Iran to inspect sites

[Global Security](#)

August 15, 2003

[Secretary Powell](#) lists the National Council of Resistance of Iran as an alias of MEK, which the State Department still considers a terrorist organization, ordering its US offices closed and its assets frozen. The NCR charges that this is a part of the negotiations for Iran to turn over al-Qaeda operatives under its control and allow IAEA to inspect its nuclear sites.

[US Government](#)

[MEK](#)

August 26, 2003

IAEA reports it has found particles of highly enriched uranium at Natanz. Iran says the particles must have come in with the imported centrifuges.

This is later confirmed by tests.

[Global Security](#)

October 4, 2003

Robert Novak column outing Brewster Jennings, Valerie Plame's front company at the CIA.

Brewster Jennings was involved in tracking proliferation in the Middle East.

[Town Hall](#)

[Raw Story](#)

October 2003

Reports emerge of [Dr. A.Q. Khan's dealings with Iran](#). Khan is a notorious black market proliferator of nuclear weapon components and designs. Brewster Jennings was in part tracking the Khan network, as well as creating obstacles for Iranian development of WMD from products purchased on the black market.

[eJournal](#)

[Raw Story](#)

[Guardian](#)

October 21, 2003

Iran agrees to accept tougher IAEA inspections.

[CNN](#)

October 24, 2003

Franklin and Naor Gilin speak on the phone about how work on the US policy towards Iran in which they have been interested seems to have stopped.

[Franklin indictment](#)

The Quiet Interim

December 2003

According to Seymour Hersh, by the end of 2003, the Israelis have concluded that the US is incapable of stabilizing Iraq. In response, they began training Kurdish commandos to run operations inside Kurdish areas of Syria and Iran and to spy on Iranian nuclear facilities. Israel is convinced that Iran is on the verge of developing nuclear weapons.

[New Yorker](#)

After a Year of Quiet, Iran is on the Table Again, September 2004 - September 2005

September 27, 2004

President Bush tells Fox News talking head Bill O'Reilly that the US will never let Iran acquire nuclear weapons and that *"all options are on the table."*

[FOX News](#)

October 2004

According to former UN weapons inspector, [Scott Ritter](#), the Pentagon presents George Bush at this time with a status report on its plans to have a viable military option for Iran in place by June 2005.

[PNAC Info](#)

January 6, 2005

The Iran Freedom Support Act, supporting “a transition to democracy in Iran,” is introduced in the House of Representatives. It is introduced in the Senate on February 9.

[SourceWatch](#)
[The Orator](#)

January 20, 2005

Vice President Cheney states that Iran is “*right at the top of the list*” of global trouble spots and hints that Israel might strike to shut down its nuclear program.

[Washington Post](#)

January 2005

The National Intelligence Council orders a new NIE on Iran.

[Washington Post](#)

January 2005

The Iran Policy Committee is founded, with the objective of promoting regime change in Iran and with a membership dominated by Neocons and defense contractors. It is an active supporter of MEK.

[RightWeb](#)
[Online Journal](#)

April 6, 2005

The newly-formed Iran Human Rights and Democracy Caucus in the House of Representatives sponsors a briefing by the Iran Policy Committee promoting support for MEK. A similar briefing follows on May 10.

[RightWeb](#)

June 12, 2005

Bomb blasts in the Iranian city of Ahwaz. According to Raw Story, MEK forces carried out these bombings in hopes of provoking a Sunni insurgency.

[BBC News](#)
[Raw Story](#)

June 14, 2005

Publication of Kenneth Timmerman's *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran*.

Timmerman is a Neocon who has been pressing for confrontation with Iran ever since his formation of the Foundation for Democracy in Iran in 1995. He has been responsible for disseminating numerous stories intended to discredit the Iranian regime, many of which have quickly proved to be false.

[Amazon](#)
[FDI](#)

June 20, 2005

Scott Ritter reports that "the US war with Iran has already begun." He says the US is using pilotless drones and also sending MEK members into Iranian territory as special operations forces.

Raw Story, in a 2006 article, also reported on the use of MEK in Iran:

"The Pentagon is bypassing official US intelligence channels and turning to a dangerous and unruly cast of characters in order to create strife in Iran in preparation for any possible attack, former and current intelligence officials say.

"One of the operational assets being used by the Defense Department is a right-wing terrorist organization known as Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK), which is being "run" in two southern regional areas of Iran. They are Baluchistan, a Sunni stronghold, and Khuzestan, a Shia region where a series of recent attacks has left many dead and hundreds injured in the last three months."

[CommonDreams](#)
[Raw Story](#)

July 20, 2005

Rep. Curt Weldon and House Intelligence Committee Chair [Peter Hoekstra](#) (R-MI) are reported to have met in Paris the previous week with Manucher Ghorbanifar's associate, "Ali."

[McClatchy](#)

August 2, 2005

The *Washington Post* reports the leak of a new NIE on Iran assessing they are ten years away from having the ability to make nuclear weapons.

[Washington Post](#)

September 13, 2005

The *Washington Post* reports that the Bush administration has been trying to convince allies that Iran is on a fast track to obtaining nuclear weapons, using a presentation at odds with

the NIE.

[Washington Post](#)

Pressure for Sanctions and a Possible Attack, December 2005 - May 2006

December 19, 2005

President Bush states that Iran cannot be allowed to have the capacity to enrich uranium because it *"would lead to a weapons program."*

[White House](#)

early January 2006

Plane carrying 11 top commanders of Iran's Revolutionary Guards goes down near the Iraq border. Foul play is suspected, and Iran accuses the US and UK of bringing the plane down through electronic jamming.

[Asia Times](#)

mid-January 2006

Kenneth Timmerman of the Foundation for Democracy in Iran tells Israeli radio he expects a pre-emptive strike on Iran by Israel within 60 days.

[Asia Times](#)

January 19, 2006

A pro-MEK rally in Washington is endorsed by Representatives Tom [Tancredo](#) (R-CO), [Bob Filner](#) (D-CA), and other members of Congress.

[RightWeb](#)

February 4, 2006

The IAEA votes to report Iran to the Security Council, a step potentially leading to UN sanctions.

[CBC](#)

February 2006

Condoleezza Rice asks Congress for an extra \$75 million to promote democracy and assist dissidents in Iran, much of it to go to the Voice of America.

[Information Clearing House](#)

March 2006

An attack said to have been carried out by MEK kills 22 Iranian officials.

[Raw Story](#)

March 2006

The State Department creates an Office of Iranian Affairs, while the Pentagon creates an Iranian Directorate, on orders from Vice President Cheney, thereby undercutting Negroponte's role as Director of National Intelligence.

The Iranian Directorate appears to be equivalent to the Office of Special Plans that is said to have played a central role in fixing the pre-war Iraq intelligence.

[Information Clearing House](#)

[Raw Story](#)

[Raw Story](#)

March-April 2006

The US begins a hard push for a UN resolution that could pave the way for military action against Iran.

[Raw Story](#)

April 9, 2006

The *Washington Post* reports that "the Bush administration is studying options for military strikes against Iran."

[Washington Post](#)

TIME LINE

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