

Fact Sheets of Iran-US Standoff: Twenty Reasons against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran

By [CASMII](#)

Global Research, November 13, 2007

[The Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran \(CASMII\)](#) 13
November 2007

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?,
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INTRODUCTION



Five years into the US-UK illegal invasion of Iraq and its consequent catastrophe for Iraqi people, peace loving people throughout the world are appalled by the current Iran-US standoff and its resemblance to the run-up to the invasion of Iraq . The hawks, headed by Dick Cheney in Washington , are now shamelessly calling for a military attack on Iran . The same Israeli lobby which pushed for the invasion of Iraq is now pushing for a military attack on Iran . The same distortions which were attempted to dupe the western public opinion for the invasion of Iraq , are now used to pave the way for another illegal pre-emptive war of aggression against Iran . As in the case of Iraq , the UN Security Council Resolutions against Iran , extricated through massive US pressure, are meant to provide a veneer of legitimacy for such an attack.

Contrary to the myth created by the western media, it is the US and its European allies which are defying the international community, in that they have rejected negotiations without pre-conditions. They show their lack of good faith by demanding that Iran concede the main point of negotiations, namely, suspension of enrichment of uranium which is Iran 's legitimate right under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, before the negotiations actually start.

The Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMII) calls for immediate and direct negotiations between the US and Iran without any pre-conditions.

Here, we debunk the main unfounded accusations, lies and distortions by the US and Israel and their allies while highlighting the main reasons to oppose sanctions and military intervention against Iran .

IRAN 'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME: FACTS AND LIES

1. There is no evidence of a nuclear weapons programme in Iran . The US and its allies pressure Iran to prove that it is not hiding a nuclear weapons programme. This demand is logically impossible to satisfy and serves to make diplomacy fail in order to force regime change. Numerous intrusive and snap visits by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, totalling more than 2,700 person-hours of inspection, have failed to produce a shred of evidence for a weapons programme in Iran . Traces of highly enriched uranium found at Natanz in 2004, were determined by the IAEA to have come with imported centrifuges.

In July 2007, IAEA and Iran agreed on a work plan with defined modalities and timetable to clarify all issues of concerns in relation to Iran 's nuclear programme. On 27 th August 2007 IAEA announced that *"The Agency has been able to verify the non-diversion of the declared nuclear materials at the enrichment facilities in Iran and has therefore concluded that it remains in peaceful use "*. The [Agreement](#) also cleared Iran 's plutonium experiments, which the Cheney Camp had accused of being evidence of Iran 's weaponisation programme.

Dr Mohammad El-Baradei, the IAEA Director General, [said](#) on 7 th September 2007, *"For the last few years we have been told by the Security Council, by the board, we have to clarify the outstanding issues in Iran because these outstanding issues are the ones that have led to the lack of confidence, the crisis" , "We have not come to see any undeclared activities or weaponisation of their programme"*.

Two years earlier, in June 2005, Bruno Pellaud, former IAEA Deputy Director General for Safeguards, was asked by Swissinfo if Iran was intent on building a nuclear bomb. He replied: *"My impression is not. My view is based on the fact that Iran took a major gamble in December 2003 by allowing a much more intrusive capability to the IAEA. If Iran had had a military programme they would not have allowed the IAEA to come under this Additional Protocol. They did not have to."*

2. Iran 's need for nuclear power generation is real. Even when Iran 's population was one-third of what it is today, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, negotiating on behalf of President Gerald Ford, [persuaded](#) the former Shah that Iran needed over twenty nuclear reactors. With Iran 's population of 70 million, and growing, and its oil resources fast depleting, Iran may be a net importer of oil in just over a decade from now. Nuclear energy is thus a realistic and viable solution for electricity generation in the country.

3. The "crisis" over Iran 's nuclear programme lacks the urgency claimed by Washington . Weapons grade uranium must be enriched at least to 85%. A 2005 CIA report determined that it could take Iran 10 years to achieve this level of enrichment. Many independent nuclear experts have stated that Iran would face formidable technical obstacles if it tried to enrich uranium beyond the 3.5% purity required for electricity generation. According to Dr Frank Barnaby of the Oxford Research Group, because of contamination of Iranian uranium with heavy metals, Iran [cannot](#) possibly enrich beyond even 20% without support from Russia or China. IAEA director, Dr. Mohammad ElBaradei, too, reiterated in October 2007 that *"I don't see Iran , today, to be a clear and present danger. And our conclusion here is supported by every intelligence assessment I've seen that even if Iran has ambitions to develop nuclear weapons, it's still three to eight years away from that"*.

4. Iran has met its obligations under the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Iran voluntarily accepted and enforced safeguards stricter than IAEA's Additional Protocol until February 2006, when Iran 's nuclear file was reported, under the pressure from the US , to

the Security Council. (The US , by contrast, has neither signed nor implemented the Additional Protocol, and Israel has refused to sign the NPT.)

Iran 's earlier concealment of its nuclear programme took place in the context of the US-backed invasion of Iran by Saddam. Not only the U.S. , Germany , and the UK were complicit in the sale of chemical weapons to Saddam which were used against Iranian soldiers and civilians but Israel 's destruction of Iraq 's Osirak reactor in 1981 was treated with total impunity. Iranian leaders then concluded from these gross injustices that international laws are only "ink on paper".

But the most direct reasons for Iran 's concealment were the American trade embargo on Iran and Washington 's organized and persistent campaign to stop civilian nuclear technology from reaching Iran from any source. For example, in 1995 Germany offered to let Kraftwerk Union (a subsidiary of Siemens) finish Iran 's Bushehr reactor, but withdrew its proposal under US [pressure](#). The following year, China [cancelled](#) its contract to build a nuclear enrichment facility in Isfahan for the same reason. Thus Washington systematically violated, with impunity, Article IV of the NPT, which allows "signatories the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy".

Nevertheless, Iran 's decision not to declare all of its nuclear installations did not violate its NPT obligations. [According](#) to David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, who first provided satellite imagery and analysis in December 2002 [7], under the safeguards agreement in force at the time, " Iran is not required to allow IAEA inspections of a new nuclear facility until six months before nuclear material is introduced into it."

5. Iran has given unprecedented concessions on its nuclear programme. Unlike North Korea , Iran has resisted the temptation to withdraw from the NPT. Besides accepting snap inspections under Additional Protocol until February 2006, Iran has invited Western companies to develop Iran 's civilian nuclear programme. Such joint ventures would create the best assurance that the enriched uranium would not be diverted to a weapons programme. Such concessions are very rare in the world, but the U.S. and its allies have refused Iran 's offer.

6. Enrichment of uranium for a civilian nuclear programme is Iran 's inalienable right. Every member of the NPT has the right to enrich uranium for a civilian nuclear programme and is entitled to full technical assistance.

But with the US as the back seat driver and in violation of their assistance obligations, France , Germany , and the UK insisted throughout the three years of negotiations that Tehran forfeit its right, in return for incentives of little value. Some European diplomats admitted to Asia Times Online on 7th September 2005, that the package offered by the EU-3 was "*an empty box of chocolates.*" But "*there is nothing else we can offer,*" the diplomats went on to [say](#). "*The Americans simply wouldn't let us.*"

7. The Western alliance has not tried true diplomacy and relies instead on threats. Iran refuses to suspend its enrichment of uranium before bilateral negotiations begin, as demanded by the White House, because it suspects Washington will stall with endless doubts regarding verification of suspension.

WESTERN HYPOCRISY

8. The UN resolutions against Iran , in contrast to the treatment of the US allies, South Korea , India , Pakistan , and Israel , smack of double standards. For example, in the year 2000, South Korea enriched 200 milligrams of uranium to near-weapons grade (up to 77%), but was not referred to the UN Security Council.

India has refused to sign the NPT or allow inspections and has developed an atomic arsenal, but receives nuclear assistance from the US in violation of the NPT. More bizarrely, India has a seat on the governing board of IAEA and, under US pressure, voted to refer Iran as a violator to the UN Security Council. Another non-signatory, Pakistan , clandestinely developed nuclear weapons but is supported by the US as a “war on terror” ally.

Israel is a close ally of Washington , even though it has hundreds of clandestine nuclear weapons, has dismissed numerous UN resolutions and has refused to sign the NPT or open any of its nuclear plants to inspections.

The US itself is the most serious violator of the NPT. The only country to have ever used nuclear bombs in war, the US has refused to reduce its nuclear arsenal, in violation of Article VI of NPT. The US is also in breach of the Treaty because it is developing new generations of nuclear warheads for use against non-nuclear adversaries. Moreover, Washington has deployed hundreds of such tactical nuclear weapons all around the world in violation of Articles I and II of the NPT.

9. Iran has not threatened Israel or attacked another country. The track records of the US , Israel , the UK and France are very different. These so called “democracies” have a bloody history of invading other countries. Iran ‘s supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, has declared repeatedly that Iran will not attack or threaten any country. He has also issued a fatwa against the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and banned nuclear weapons as sacrilegious. Iran has been a consistent supporter of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and called for a nuclear weapons free Middle East .

The comments of Iran ‘s President Ahmadinejad against Israel have been repeated by some of Iran ‘s leaders since 1979 and constitute no practical threat. The statement attributed to him that “ *Israel should be wiped off the map*” is a distortion of the truth and has been determined by a number of Farsi linguists, amongst them, Professor Juan Cole, to be a mistranslation. What he actually said was that “*the regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time*”. Ahmadinejad has made clear that he envisions regime change in Israel through internal decay, similar to the demise of the Soviet Union . Iranian leaders have said consistently for two decades that they will accept a two-state solution in Palestine if a majority of Palestinians favour that option.

This is in sharp contrast to the explicit threats by Israeli and the US leaders against Iran , including aid to separatist movements to [disintegrate](#) and wipe Iran off the map, as reported by [Seymour Hersh](#) and [Reese Erlich](#). There is considerable evidence of clandestine operations by the US , British and Israeli agents who are arming, training and funding terrorist entities such as Jundollah in Baluchistan, Arab separatists in Khuzestan, and PJAK in Kurdistan . These concrete attempts at disintegration of Iran , as well as the 100 million dollars congressional funding for ‘democracy’ promotion in Iran , constitute aggression and are interference in Iran ‘s domestic affairs and Iranian people’s rights of sovereignty. They violate the bilateral Algiers Accord of 1981, in which Washington renounced any such actions in the future.

Furthermore, President Bush and Vice President Cheney, former UN ambassador, John Bolton, Senator Lieberman, as well as presidential candidates Giuliani, Romney and McCain are openly advocating and pushing for pre-emptive military attack on Iran. The French President, Sarkouzy, and his Foreign Minister, Kouchner, the new recruits to the Neo Cons camp, have added their voice to this chorus for war . British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, too has not ruled out the pre-emptive military option against Iran .

Iran is no match for Israel , whose security and military needs are all but guaranteed by the US . Iran is surrounded on all sides by the US Navy and American bases.

Iran has not invaded or threatened any country for two and a half centuries. The only war the Islamic Republic fought was the one imposed by Saddam's army, which invaded Iran with the backing of the US and its allies. When Iraq used chemical weapons, supplied by the West, against Iranian troops, Iran did not retaliate in kind. When Afghanistan 's Taliban regime murdered eight Iranian diplomats in 1996 and remained unapologetic, Iran did not respond militarily.

10. The US "democratization" programme for Iran is a hoax. Although violations of human rights and democratic freedoms do occur too often in Iran , the country has the most pluralistic system in a region dominated by undemocratic client states of the US . It is sheer hypocrisy for the US, which turns a blind eye to the gross human rights abuses by its allies, such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Libya, and Egypt, to misrepresent its agenda in Iran as a "democratization" programme. Washington 's pretensions ring especially hollow when one remembers that in 1953 Iran 's nascent democracy under Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq was overthrown by the CIA, which restored a hated military dictatorship for the benefit of American oil conglomerates.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED

11. There are no legal bases for Iran 's referral to the UN Security Council. Since there is no evidence that Iran is even contemplating to weaponize its nuclear programme, no grounds exist for this sidelining of the IAEA.

Michael Spies of the New York-based Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy has [clarified](#) the issue: "Under the Statute (Art. 12(C)) and the Safeguards Agreement, the Board may only refer Iran to the Security Council if it finds that, based on the report from the Director General, it cannot be assured that Iran has not diverted nuclear material for non-peaceful purpose. In the past, findings of 'non-assurance' have only come in the face of a history of active and ongoing non-cooperation with IAEA safeguards. The pursuit of nuclear activities in itself, which is specifically recognized as a sovereign right, and which remain safeguarded, could not legally or logically equate to uncertainty regarding diversion."

IAEA director, Dr ElBaradei, has consistently confirmed that there has been no diversion of safeguarded nuclear material in Iran and the recent IAEA-Iran workplan of July 2007 has reconfirmed this. He has also said, under pressure from Washington , that he cannot rule out the existence of undeclared nuclear activities in the country. However, according to the IAEA's Safeguards Implementation Report for 2005 (issued on 15 June 2006), 45 other countries, including 14 European countries, in particular Germany , are in this same category as Iran . ElBaradei added in September 2007 that in Iran *"we have not come to see any undeclared activities ... We have not seen any weaponisation of their programme, nor have we received any information to that effect"* . He has also repeatedly urged skeptics in

Western capitals to help the IAEA by sharing any possible proof in their possession of suspicious nuclear activity in Iran .

Moreover, according to the UK-based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, certifying non-diversion of nuclear material to military purposes for any given country takes an average of six years of inspections and verification by the IAEA. In the case of Iran , these investigations have been going on for only about four years now.

Iran 's file, therefore, must be returned to the jurisdiction of the IAEA and the rules of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The US and its allies violated the rules by exerting massive pressure on the IAEA to report Iran without any legitimacy to the UN Security Council. For example, David Mulford, the US Ambassador to India , warned the Government of India in January 2006 that there would be no US-India nuclear deal if India did not vote against Iran at the IAEA. On February 15th 2007, Stephen Rademaker, the former US Assistant Secretary for International Security and Non-Proliferation, [admitted](#) publicly that the US coerced India to vote against Iran. Clearly, reporting Iran to the UN Security Council and the subsequent adoption of the Resolutions 1696 and 1737 have been carried out with US [coercion](#) and have thus no legitimacy at all.

SANCTIONS NOT A GOOD IDEA

12. Dr ElBradei, the head of the IAEA, has [said](#) that more sanctions are counterproductive. Economic sanctions on Iran will harm the people of Iran , as they were devastating to Iraqis, resulting in the death of at least 500,000 children. Sanctions would not however bring the Islamic Republic to its knees. Instead, any kind of sanctions, including the so-called "targeted" or "smart" sanctions, are viewed by the Iranian people as the West's punishment for Iran 's scientific progress (uranium enrichment for reactor fuel). As sanctions tighten, nationalist fervour will strengthen the resolve of Iranians to defend the country's civilian nuclear programme.

13. Sanctions are not better than war; they can be exploited as a diplomatic veneer and a provocative prelude to military attack, as they were in Iraq . Thus, countries which support sanctions against Iran are only falling into the US trap in aiding the war drive on Iran .

STRATEGIC SHIFT TO MULTI-FOCAL TARGETS

14. A US attack on Iran is imminent. The end of George Bush's presidency in 2009 could be a serious set back for the NeoCons' hegemonic dreams to control the energy resources in the region. He is unlikely to leave office bearing the legacy of failures in Afghanistan and Iraq and particularly leaving Iran a stronger player in the region. Thus the likelihood of military attack on Iran before Bush leaves office is a reality. Washington insiders have told security analysts that preparations for military attack have been made and are ready for execution.

Since January, in addition to the nuclear issue, the US has also focused its propaganda to falsely implicate Iran in the violence and failures of US policies in Afghanistan and Iraq . The Iran-US bilateral dialogue this summer was derailed amidst accusations that Iran aided the killing of American soldiers by providing sophisticated weapons and training to Afghan and Iraqi fighters. As in the nuclear case, Washington has provided no proof .

British Foreign Minister, David Miliband, admitted in an interview with the Financial Times on

8 th July 07 that there was “No Evidence” of Iranian involvement in the violence and instability in Iraq . Likewise, the British Defence Minister, Des Browne, in August 07 maintained categorically that “No Evidence” existed of Iranian government’s complicity or instigation in supplying weapons to Iraqi militias. The Washington Post, too, [reported](#) from Iraq that hundreds of British troops combing southern Iraq for sign of Iranian weapons have come up empty-handed. Furthermore, Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, and Al-Maleki, the Iraqi Prime Minister, have stated Iran ‘s positive role in providing whatever limited stability there is in both these countries. Nevertheless, G eorge Bush’s speech on 28 th August, authorizing the American military to “ *confront Tehran ‘s murderous activities*”, and the deployment of British troops to the Iranian border to guard against Iran ‘s “*proxy war*” in Iraq , signaled a systematic building towards a casus belli for another illegal pre-emptive war. The Kyle-Lieberman [Amendment](#) to the Defence Authorisation Bill, too, accused Iran of killing American servicemen in Iraq and nearly authorized the military to take all necessary action to combat Iran .

A third focus in the US war drive has now been launched by branding Iran ‘s Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization. This unprecedented move in US foreign policy and international relations is the proclaimed basis for imposing the toughest sanctions ever on Iranian banks, companies and individuals.

These new measures represent a massive escalation in the US war drive, they are a prelude to a military attack on Iran and provide the legal pretext for the US military to wage war on Iran without the prior approval of the US Congress.

ILLEGALITY OF A MILITARY ATTACK

15. Foreign state interference in Iran violates the UN charter. According to Seymour Hersch, the US is running covert operations in Iran to foment unrest and ethnic conflict for the purpose of regime change. Unmanned US drones have also entered into Iranian air space to spy over Iranian military installations and to map Iranian radar systems. These actions violate the UN Charter’s guarantee of the right of self-determination for all nations.

The Bush Administration has also confirmed, in the 2006 US National Security Strategy, its long term policy for pre-emptive military action against Washington ‘s rivals. Former British prime minister, Tony Blair, supported this policy in his 21st March 2006 foreign policy speech, and his successor Gordon Brown has not rejected the pre-emptive use of military force against Iran . However, unprovoked strikes are illegal under international law. To remove this obstacle, John Reid, the then British Secretary of Defence, in his speech on 3rd April 2006 to the Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, proposed a change in international law on pre-emptive military action.

16. Reports of nuclear attack scenarios against Iran can serve to raise the public’s tolerance for an act of aggression with conventional military means. People of conscience and sanity must not only condemn even contemplation of a nuclear attack, but also denounce any conventional attack.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF AN ATTACK ON IRAN

17. Bombing cannot end Iran ‘s nuclear programme. Since Iran already has the expertise to enrich uranium up to the 3.5% grade for a fuel cycle, no degree of bombing will halt Iran ‘s civilian nuclear programme. On the contrary, the resulting mass casualties and destruction

would strengthen the voices that argue Iran , like North Korea , should build a nuclear deterrent.

18. An attack on Iran will unite Iranians against the US and its allies. A great majority of the public in Iran support the country's right to enrich uranium for civilian purposes. This has been [confirmed](#) by all opinion polls conducted in the country, including polls taken by Western institutions. Therefore, a bombing campaign will not lead to an uprising by the Iranian people for regime change as envisaged by the US . Rather, it would ignite nationalist feelings in the country and unite the population, including most of the government's critics, against the West.

19. A nuclear attack on Iran would fuel a new nuclear arms race and ruin the NPT. Any military intervention against Iran will lead to a regional catastrophe and expanded terrorism. Senator McCain, the Republican presidential hopeful, who has himself advocated the use of force on Iran , has predicted that an attack against Iran will lead to Armageddon. American or Israeli aggression on Iran , coming on the heels of the Iraq disaster, would inflame the grievance and outrage of Muslims worldwide and help jihadi extremists with their recruitment campaign. The region wide conflagration resulting from an Israel/US attack on Iran would dwarf the Iraq [catastrophe](#).

20. The cause of democracy in Iran will suffer gravely if the country is attacked. President Bush's "axis of evil" rhetoric severely undermined the reformist movement in Iran at a time when the country's president promoted Dialogue Among Civilizations. Bush's hostile posture strengthened the hands of Iranian hardliners and contributed to the reformist movement's electoral defeat in 2005. That setback would be dwarfed by the consequences of a military assault on the country.

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