

General Pace fired to clear way for “national emergency,” Iran nuclear strike?

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“It is the absolute responsibility of everybody in uniform to disobey an order that is either illegal or immoral.” –General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, [National Press Club](#), February 17, 2006.

“They will be held accountable for the decisions they make. So they should in fact not obey the illegal and immoral orders to use weapons of mass destruction.” —General Peter Pace, [CNN With Wolf Blitzer](#), April 6, 2003

The surprise decision by the Bush regime to replace General Peter Pace as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been explained as a necessary step to avoid contentious confirmation hearings in the US Senate. Gen. Pace’s reappointment would have to be confirmed, and as the general has served as vice chairman and chairman of the Joint Chiefs for the past six years, the Republicans feared that hearings would give war critics an opportunity to focus, in Defense Secretary Gates words, [“on the past, rather than the future.”](#)

This is a plausible explanation. Whether one takes it on face value depends on how much trust one still has in a regime that has consistently lied about everything for six years.

General Pace himself says he was forced out when he refused to “take the issue off the table” by voluntarily retiring. Pace himself was sufficiently disturbed by his removal to strain his relations with the powers that be by not going quietly.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorial page interpreted Pace’s removal as indication that “the man running the Pentagon is Democratic Senator Carl Levin of Michigan. For that matter, is George W. Bush still President?” [[General Retreat](#), June 11, 2007]

The *Wall Street Journal* editorial writers’ attempt to portray Pace’s departure as evidence of a weak and appeasing administration does not ring true. An administration that escalates the war in Iraq in the face of public opposition and pushes ahead with its plan to attack Iran is not an appeasing administration. Whether it is the war or [Attorney General Gonzales](#) or the [immigration bill](#) or anything else, President Bush and his Republican stalwarts have told Congress and the American people that they don’t care what Congress and the public think. Bush’s [signing statements](#) make it clear that he doesn’t even care about the [laws that Congress writes](#).

A president audacious enough to continue an unpopular and pointless war in the face of public opinion and a lost election is a president who is not too frightened to reappoint a

general. Why does Bush run from General Pace when he fervently supports embattled Attorney General Gonzales? What troops does Bush support? He [supports his toadies](#).

There are, of course, other explanations for General Pace's departure. The most disturbing of these explanations can be found in General Pace's two statements at the beginning of this article.

In the first statement General Pace says that every member of the US military has the absolute responsibility to disobey illegal and immoral orders. In the second statement, General Pace says that an order to use weapons of mass destruction is an illegal and immoral order.

The context of General Pace's second statement above (actually, the first statement in historical time) is his response to Blitzer's question whether the invading US troops could be attacked with Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. But Pace's answer does not restrict illegal and immoral only to Iraqi use of WMD. It is a general statement. It applies to their use period.

On March 10, 2006, Jorge Hirsch made a case that use of nuclear weapons is both illegal and immoral. [[Gen. Pace to Troops: Don't Nuke Iran](#), Antiwar.com] Despite the illegality and immorality of first-use of nuclear weapons, the Bush Pentagon rewrote US war doctrine to permit their use regardless of their illegality and immorality. For a regime that not only believes that might is right but also that they have the might, law is what the regime says.

The revised war doctrine permits US first strike use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries. We need to ask ourselves why the Bush administration would blacken America's reputation and rekindle the nuclear arms race unless the administration had plans to apply its new war doctrine.

Senator Joseph Lieberman, a number of [neoconservatives](#), prominent Jewish leaders such as [Norman Podhoretz](#), and members of the Israeli government have called for a [US attack on Iran](#). Most Republican presidential candidates have said that they would not rule out the use of nuclear weapons against Iran.

Allegedly, the US Department of State is pursuing diplomacy with Iran, not war, but Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns gives the lie to that claim. On June 12 Burns claimed that Iran was not only arming insurgents in Iraq but also the Taliban in Afghanistan. Burns' claims are, to put it mildly, controversial in the US intelligence community, and they are denied not only by Iran but also by our puppet government in Afghanistan. On June 14, Afghan Defense [Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak told the Associated Press that Burns' claim has no credibility](#).

But, of course, none of the administration's propagandistic claims that set the stage for the invasion of Iraq had any credibility either, and the lack of credibility did not prevent the claims from deceiving the Congress and the American people. As the US media now functions as the administration's Ministry of Propaganda, the Bush regime believes that it can stampede Americans with lies into another war.

The Bush regime has concluded that a conventional attack on Iran would do no more than stir up a hornet's nest and release retaliatory actions that the US could not manage. The Bush regime is convinced that only nuclear weapons can bring the mullahs to heel.

The Bush regime's plan to attack Iran with nuclear weapons puts General Pace's departure in a different light. How can President Bush succeed with an order to attack with nuclear weapons when America's highest ranking military officer says that such an order is "illegal and immoral" and that *everyone* in the military has an "absolute responsibility" to disobey it?

An alternative explanation for Pace's departure is that Pace had to go so that malleable toadies can be installed in his place.

Pace's departure removes a known obstacle to a nuclear attack on Iran, thus advancing that possible course of action. A plan to attack Iran with nuclear weapons might also explain the otherwise inexplicable "National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive" ([NSPD-51 AND HSPD-20](#)) that Bush issued on May 9. Bush's directive allows him to declare a "national emergency" on his authority alone without ratification by Congress. Once Bush declares a national emergency, he can take over all functions of government at every level, as well as private organizations and businesses, and remain in total control until he declares the emergency to be over.

Who among us would trust Bush, or any president, with this power?

What is the necessity of such a sweeping directive subject to no check or ratification?

What catastrophic emergency short of a massive attack on the US with nuclear ICBMs can possibly justify such a directive?

There is no obvious answer to the question. The federal government's inability to respond to Hurricane Katrina is hard evidence that [centralizing power in one office](#) is not the way to deal with catastrophes.

A speculative answer is that, with appropriate propaganda, the directive could be triggered by a US nuclear attack on Iran. The use of nuclear weapons arouses the ultimate fear. A US nuclear attack would send Russian and Chinese ICBMs into high alert. False flag operations could be staged in the US. The propagandistic US media would hype such developments to the hilt, portraying danger everywhere. Fear of the regime's new detention centers would silence most voices of protest as the regime declares its "national emergency."

This might sound like a far-out fiction novel, but it is a scenario that would explain the Bush regime's disinterest in the shrinking Republican vote that foretells a massive Republican wipeout in the 2008 election. In a declared national emergency, there would be no election.

As implausible as this might sound to people who trust the government, be aware that despite his rhetoric, Bush has no respect for democracy. His neoconservative advisors have all been taught that it is their duty to circumvent democracy, as democracy does not produce the right decisions. Neoconservatives believe in rule by elites, and they regard themselves as the elite. The Bush regime decided that Americans would not agree to an invasion of Iraq unless they were deceived and tricked into it, and so we were.

Indeed, democracy is out of favor throughout the Western world. In the UK and Europe, peoples are being forced, despite their expressed opposition, into an [EU identity that they reject](#). British PM Tony Blair and his European counterparts have decided on their own that the people do not know best and that the people will be ignored.

As former French PM Valéry Giscard d'Estaing [told](#) the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, "Public opinion will be led to adopt, without knowing it, the proposals that we dare not present to them directly." Giscard d'Estaing is referring to the resurrection of the [rejected EU constitution](#) camouflaged as a treaty.

Giscard d'Estaing acknowledges that 450 million Europeans are being hoodwinked. Why should Americans be surprised that they have been and are being hoodwinked?

Americans might have more awareness of their peril if they realized that their leaders no longer believe in democratic outcomes.

Paul Craig Roberts [[email him](#)] was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan Administration. He is the author of [Supply-Side Revolution : An Insider's Account of Policymaking in Washington](#); [Alienation and the Soviet Economy](#) and [Meltdown: Inside the Soviet Economy](#), and is the co-author with Lawrence M. Stratton of [The Tyranny of Good Intentions : How Prosecutors and Bureaucrats Are Trampling the Constitution in the Name of Justice](#). Click [here](#) for Peter Brimelow's *Forbes Magazine* interview with Roberts about the recent epidemic of prosecutorial misconduct.

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