

# Iraq 2003 - Iran 2011: Parallel That Can Hardly Be Missed

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*Interview with Rick Rozoff, the manager of the Stop NATO website and mailing list and a contributing writer to Global Research.ca.*

You've read the IAEA report on Iran. Can you give us your quick overview?

Yes. It's a very lengthy, involved, detailed, technical document. It actually has 65 different sections, 23 pages on the online edition. The IAEA claimed to give an authoritative interpretation of the document. But there are certain points that stick out repeatedly on several occasions. For example, the report mentions that Iran may have been working on an alleged military component to its nuclear energy policy prior to 2003 - and I'm roughly paraphrasing the report - and may still be doing so.

So, there are several qualifiers, the word 'may' being the chief one. Additionally, concerning sources of information about the current situation with the enrichment of uranium, with the development of the industry as a whole and also with alleged military components like detonators and so forth, the report cites information provided by ten member states, but on several occasions by one member state. The member states are never identified. My supposition would be that the US is the first and the remaining nine are NATO allies and perhaps Israel.

Do you think that the internal US political situation has anything to do with the release of this report at this time?

It may well have everything to do with the release of the report at this time. There was an unsigned editorial in the Global Times in China, which is a publication of the ruling party, the Communist Party of China, which suggests exactly that: the economic crisis - unparalleled, one could argue - in the US and in Europe, is such that this would give rise to adventurous and even 'catastrophic', to use the word of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, actions in the Middle East, meaning strikes against Iran. In fact, that has been mentioned by several Russian diplomats, by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recently, by Deputy Minister Gennady Gatilov, I believe today, where he suggests that one of the major purposes of the release, and of the details and the media representation of it, in the West is to prepare the ground for, in his own words, 'change of regime in Iran.' So, there is a transparent political motive. Another, much more frightening, statement is that of Israeli President Shimon Peres over the past weekend that the military option is quickly overriding diplomatic ones in dealing with Iran over its nuclear program.

It seems pretty obvious, I think, to a lot of people that rhetoric is being built up in order to launch an invasion. A lot of people believe this would really destabilize the entire Middle East even further. What do you think?

It's an interesting use of the word 'rhetoric'. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has recently sounded the alarm about what he termed 'militarist rhetoric' in the Middle East and warned about potentially catastrophic consequences as a result of that. Yes, you are correct. A script that would have been rejected by even a third-rate Hollywood studio about an alleged assassination plot comes within weeks of the release of the IAEA report on Iran's civilian nuclear power plant program. So, all the pieces seem to be falling into place. And the statement – in Chicago, here, on November 9 – by the Russian Foreign Ministry that the release of the report and the political interpretation placed on the IAEA report is frighteningly reminiscent of what was done in the UN Security Council in early 2003 when the US made a similar claim about Iraq at that time developing weapons of mass destruction. A parallel that could hardly be missed.

What is the view of the man in the street in the US? Is he buying it this time?

I'm not in a position to comment. I haven't read polls, which I don't think have been conducted. There is healthy skepticism among the general population, even in relation to the recently concluded war in Libya, where polls – I'm sure your listeners are familiar with them – showed the majority of Americans not supporting the military action. So, military strikes against Iran – one could assume – would meet with a similar response amongst the general population in the US. However, we have to keep in mind how fairly disenfranchised the average American, including myself, is in the political process.

What I see as a parallel, also that nobody is talking about, with Iraq and Iran was that Iran is, I think, attempting and trying to cooperate actively with the IAEA. But the IAEA seems not to want to listen to them and come to their own conclusion. Do you think it is a fair assessment?

That is exactly what's happening. And again, in the words of a Russian diplomat within the last day or two, that the content of the report has been 'twisted' and placed in the service of a political agenda. The political agenda, as you alluded to earlier, may very well have to do with domestic policies in the US, both related to the presidential election of next year as well as congressional and senatorial elections. But also, because of the economic crisis, American people...Let me just share one anecdote with you very quickly. I am a native of Youngstown, Ohio. The lead story in the local newspaper, the Youngstown Vindicator, last week says that Youngstown currently has the highest poverty rate in the US – 49.1%. There are 250 people applying for every job, for the most part minimum-wage part-time jobs. And when you have almost half of the total city living in poverty, then self-serving and unprincipled politicians are going to point people's animosity and hostility elsewhere; they are going to do it overseas.

And Iran appears to be the lightning rod that is slated to receive that animosity. I am particularly concerned – as I know a lot of people around the world are – about the prospect of military strikes against Iran. I needn't tell anyone what the consequences would be. This will involve a general conflagration in the area and perhaps even globally.

Whereas in the past attacks against nuclear reactors in other countries, such as that in Iraq in 1981 and recently by Israel in Syria against an alleged nuclear reactor, have been

contained or limited in their scope, a massive series of strikes against the Bushehr power plant and other sites in Iran would be nothing of that sort. It would be something of an entirely different magnitude.

And the fact that the Russian foreign minister, two deputy foreign ministers, the Foreign Ministry collectively and so forth have issued the statements they have in the past few days suggests this is a much graver situation than what we have faced over the last ten years of repeated speculation about or even threats of military strikes against Iran.

Stop NATO e-mail list home page with archives and search engine:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/messages>

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