

Manufactured Crisis. The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare

Review of Gareth Porter's recently released book

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Global Research, March 21, 2014

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Since the early 1990s, Israel, U.S. officials and their submissive European allies, supported by their uncritical and subservient media, have been peddling allegations, fabrications, accusations and lies that the government of Iran was pursuing a secret, military adjunct to its regularly inspected civilian nuclear program. The main thrust of Porter's book is to demonstrate that this crisis was „manufactured“ and the accusations were bogus, i. e. Iran never had a military nuclear program. For over 20 years Israeli politicians have been claiming that Iran's nuclear device was just around the corner.

Despite the political hullabaloo and Netanyahu's call for military actions against Iran's nuclear installations. „Netanyahu never intended to use military force against Iran, and the Obama administration was well aware of that but was hoping to exploit the threat to gain diplomatic leverage on Iran“, writes Porter.

President Obama, under severe pressure from Israel, its Zionist lobby AIPAC (American Israeli Public Affairs Committee) together with the large majority of Congress, has been leading a worldwide effort to impose crippling sanctions on Iran to force it to give up its alleged nuclear-weapons program. Up until now, there exists no evidence that Iran carried out a military nuclear program. Beyond that, Gareth Porter, a historian and investigative journalist specializing in US foreign and military policy, demonstrates that the so-called stolen documents, which apparently „proved“ Iran's covert nuclear program, were „fraudulent“. These „mysterious documents“ were allegedly smuggled out of Iran on a laptop. The author unravels the contradictions between the material in the documents and well-established facts. Did the U.S rely for its „evidence“ on Israeli intelligence services?

MANUFACTURED CRISIS

The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare



Gareth Porter

Porter shows how Israel, the George W. Bush and later the Obama administration, successfully portrayed the various actions taken by Western nations and the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as responses to a long history of Iranian covert militarization of its nuclear program. Iran started its nuclear program under Reza Shah Pahlavi. At that time, the U.S. and Israel were allied with the Persian dictator and didn't mind a nuclear Iran. After the overthrow of the Shah regime in 1979, however, the United States intervened aggressively, as early as 1983, to prevent Iran from pursuing its legitimate right to peaceful nuclear power. It was these aggressive efforts by the U.S. , that forced Iran to resort to black market transactions in order to acquire the technology needed for its civilian nuclear program, writes Porter.

So far, the U.S. and Israel have done all they can to sabotage the Iranian nuclear program by, inter alia, sending hit men to assassinate Iranian nuclear scientists and infect the computers of the nuclear installations with malware. According to the online newspaper „The Times of Israel“ from March 19, 2014, the Israeli Chief of Staff Benny Gantz revealed in a speech delivered before a class of students that „Israel had already conducted dozens of covert operations in foreign and enemy countries“, and that „Our Air Force is wherever we wanted it to be.“ He added confidently that Iran is not beyond the IDF's reach. According to Porter, there exists a tendency and a power structure inside the Beltway that keeps readiness and permanent preparedness for war despite the Vietnam disaster. Does such a mentality also exist within the Israeli security establishment?

In his introduction the author submits that „U.S.-Israeli strategy was aimed at using the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to build a case that Iran's nuclear program had been merely a cover for a nuclear weapons program. That case would serve as the basis for United Nations Security Council actions that would punish Iran, or even for unilateral US military action against Iran. As a result the IAEA, which had previously been a relatively nonpolitical actor performing technical analysis of nuclear programs, was transformed over the 2003-8 period into an adjunct of the anti-Iran strategy.“

Porter describes three stages that form the basis for the progress and the escalation of the crisis. Yet, he does not view each step by the U.S. and Israel as part of a master plan. On the contrary, he argues that each stage of the strategy developed in response to political developments and problems, which emerged from further coercing Iran on the nuclear issue. The first stage was triggered by the Iranian terrorist group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK), which revealed at a August 2002 press conference Iran's Natanz enrichment facility. MEK was removed a few months ago from the U.S. „terror list“. In 2008, the second stage was triggered when the U.S. obtained from an unknown party stolen documents about a secret nuclear program. At the end of 2011, the third stage started by imposing new and more severe sanctions, targeting Iran's oil export and banking sectors. This new round of sanctions was triggered by an IAEA report based on Israeli sources.

In chapter three, the author discusses Iran's leadership attitude towards nuclear and chemical weapons. When Iraq, with massive support by the U.S., its Western cronies but also the Soviet Union, attacked Iran and used chemical weapons obtained from the U.S., Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa (religious Islamic ruling), forgoing the use of chemical weapons against Iraqis. The West dismissed his ruling as a deception and a lie. With the same arrogance another fatwa by Khomeini's successor Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the prohibition of nuclear weapons was disregarded. Western media promoted this racist attitude uncritically around the globe.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. portrayed Iran's civilian nuclear program as a cover for its alleged ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons. In chapter four, the author shows that this

accusation was intended to manufacture a new scapegoat to replace the communist scapegoat imploded at the end of 1991. The supposed threat of nuclear proliferation from Iran was a useful theory for the Pentagon and the CIA. Under the Clinton presidency Israel was brought into the picture. The other half of the story is told in chapter five. Due to the demonization of Iran, successive Israeli governments from Yitzhak Rabin to Benjamin Netanyahu attempted to achieve political and strategic aims that had nothing to do with Iran. Israel had also to pay a political price for its aggressive posture. Reciprocally, Iran regarded Israel as a military threat, writes Porter.

In 2003, then Iranian president Mohammed Khatami offered negotiations with the U.S. the George W. Bush administration rejected it off-hand because Iran was a „rogue state“ and to ranked top on the so-called „axis of evil“. WikiLeaks published cables demonstrating how closely the IAEA cooperated with the U.S. government. Under the leadership of Yukiya Amano, the reputation of the IAEA went down the drain.

Until the end of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s term in office, the Obama administration together with Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu tried to bully Iran into submission. With the election of the new President Hassan Rohani the demonization of the Iranian leadership did not work anymore. With the start of the negotiations, Israel and the Congress called for even more sanctions. In his State of the Union Address, President Obama rejected such sanctions, saying that negotiations are in the national interest of the U.S. Officially, AIPAC and its servants on Capitol Hill pursued their endeavor in more discreetly. As an outside observer, it is mind-boggling to observe how U.S. representatives on the Hill work against their own government and the interest of their country.

Manufactured Crisis presents the first alternative narrative to the Iranian nuclear issue. The author shows what disastrous impact the U.S.-Israeli alliance has on the Middle Eastern region. This fateful partnership is rooted in America’s domestic politics. The Gordian knot must be untied for the benefit of the American people. At the end of the book, one gets the impression that the „Iranian problem“ is a U.S. one, or to put it differently, the U.S. problem is the alliance with Israel and the American political class inside the Beltway.

Gareth Porter’s well researched book presents readers with a clear view, so that they can see through the web of lies, deceptions and false accusations, to discover the real enemies of peace. A timely book more than worth reading.

Gareth Porter, *Manufactured Crisis. The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare*, Just World Books, Charlottesville, VA 2014, 4xx pp., \$ 28. (ISBN: 978-1-935982-33-3).

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