

# New Cold War: Great Game for Supremacy in the New World Order?

By [Andrew Gavin Marshall](#)

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## Imperial Playground:

### The Story of Iran in Recent History

#### PART 4:

There has been much talk in recent months of a return to the Cold War, as increasingly there is growing disparities and tensing relations between the West, namely the Anglo-Americans, and the Russian Federation, the former Soviet Union, as well as China. 'Is the Cold War Back?' as the headline of a *Reuters* article asked, stating, "Russia has revived its Soviet-era practice of continuous long-range bomber patrols, sending 14 aircraft on such missions in the latest in a series of moves apparently designed to show off Russia's new-found assertiveness," and that "Russia's military is now receiving a major injection of cash to modernise ageing equipment — including new planes — after years of under-funding and neglect since the Soviet Union ceased to exist."<sup>1</sup> Recent plans made public that the United States is building missile shields in Eastern European countries has sparked equal controversy over a revival of a Cold War. As the Austrian Defense Minister Norbert Darabos stated in late August of 2007, "That the United States are installing a defense shield in eastern Europe is a provocation in my view," and that, "The U.S. has chosen the wrong path in my opinion. There is no point in building up a missile defense shield in Europe. That only unnecessarily rekindles old Cold War debates."<sup>2</sup> The article continued in saying, "The United States plans to deploy elements of its shield — designed to intercept and destroy missiles from 'rogue states' like Iran and North Korea — in Poland and the Czech Republic. Russia sees the initiative near its borders as a threat to its own security. On Tuesday Russia's military chief told the Czech Republic that hosting the shield would be a 'big mistake'. Darabos said he saw no danger from Iranian long range missiles and the United States should try for a different solution."

NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is largely controlled by the Anglo-American establishment, has also been stepping up Cold War actions. NATO was created as a treaty during the early years of the Cold War as a method of forming an alliance against the Communist powers of the world, which had a parallel treaty organization, known as the Warsaw Pact. So if the near entire life span of this organization was in containing communist countries, namely the Soviet Union, it does not seem unlikely that it would return to what it does best. As the *Sunday Telegraph* reported in late August of 2007, "NATO vessels are closely monitoring the sea trials of Russia's latest submarine, following Moscow's increasingly provocative tests of Western airspace. In the latest twist to worsening East-West relations, Nato submarines and surface ships, which may include Royal Navy vessels,

are trying to gather information on the new Amur class boat being tested in the Baltic,” and that, “The greater-than-normal scrutiny is, in part, a response to Russia’s decision to resume long-range bomber flights close to Nato airspace which has revived memories of Cold War confrontation between the two blocs,” and it further mentioned that, “Twice this summer, Russian Tu-95 nuclear bombers have been spotted heading towards British airspace off Scotland, prompting the RAF [Royal Air Force] to send intercepting aircraft to warn them off. On another occasion, Russian planes came within striking distance of the US Pacific airbase of Guam.”<sup>3</sup>

The article continues in explaining, “Apart from the threat it [the Russian submarine] poses as part of the Russian navy, Moscow is believed to have won contracts to export it to other states such as Venezuela, which is challenging the United States’ influence in Latin America. Russia also exports weapons to Iran and Sudan, although there is no sign yet that either country plans to buy an Amur class submarine. The fact that President Vladimir Putin’s regime is testing a powerful new addition to the Russian navy – after its fleet went through years of decline – shows a new military build-up is underway.” The article further stated, “Russia’s neighbour Georgia claimed yesterday that it, too, was being intimidated by Moscow. Russian jets, the government said, had twice entered its airspace this week. Earlier this month, a Russian warplane had fired a missile at a village on its territory. But Russia protested its innocence yesterday, accusing Georgia of inventing the charge to stir up tensions. Vitaly Churkin, Russia’s ambassador to the United Nations said that the bomb fragments produced as evidence were of foreign origin.”

On this growing issue between Russia and Georgia, *Press TV* reported that, “Georgia’s aim to accelerate its joining the NATO by playing risky power games with Russia can stretch Moscow’s patience too far, observers say. ‘There is a threat’ that rising tensions between the two former Soviet republics could provoke a confrontation, said Pavel Felgenhauer, an independent Russian defense analyst,” and that, “During the 2006 winter, Russian gas supplies to Georgia were cut off for prolonged repairs on a pipeline. A few months later, Russia banned the import of wine and mineral water from Georgia. Then, in September 2006, Georgia arrested four Russian officers charged for spying. This prompted Russia to suspend all direct transport and postal links, as well as to deport hundreds of Georgian immigrants from Russia. Russia has also given political and economic backing to two Georgian separatist regions.”<sup>4</sup>

It was also reported that, “The Russian ambassador to the Court of St James’s rejects US statements over the controversial Missile Defense project to be exclusively against Iran. ‘There is no convincing explanation for the installation of the US Missile Defense in eastern Asia,’ said Yuri Viktorovich Fedotov in an interview with BBC Radio. ‘Despite what US calls a missile defense shield against Iran, the project is a threat for Russia and other countries,’ Fedotov added,” and that “The statements are made as recent diplomatic conflict between Britain and Russia over the missile defense project and the verbal war for the extradition of a Russian agent accused of being involved in the murder of Alexander [Litvinenko] in London has escalated.”<sup>5</sup>

In early September of 2007, it was reported by the *BBC* that, “The UK’s Royal Air Force has launched fighter jets to intercept eight Russian military planes flying in airspace patrolled by Nato, UK officials say. Four RAF F3 Tornado aircraft were scrambled in response to the Russian action, the UK’s defence ministry said. The Russian planes – long-range bombers – had earlier been followed by Norwegian F16 jets.”<sup>6</sup> Also in early September it was reported by the *Financial Times* that, “The Chinese military hacked into a Pentagon

computer network in June in the most successful cyber attack on the US defence department, say American –officials. The Pentagon acknowledged shutting down part of a computer system serving the office of Robert Gates, defence secretary, but declined to say who it believed was behind the attack. Current and former officials have told the Financial Times an internal investigation has revealed that the incursion came from the People’s Liberation Army [of China].”[7](#)

As well as this, it was reported that, “Taiwan’s cabinet agreed Wednesday to hike military spending by nearly 15 percent in next year’s budget in an apparent signal of its resolve against rival China. Under a draft budget, which has to be confirmed by parliament, the defence ministry is setting aside 345.9 billion Taiwan dollars (10.5 billion US), up 44.6 billion Taiwan dollars, the cabinet said in a statement,” and that, “The rise in spending is mainly aimed at financing procurement of military equipment, including US-made P-3C submarine-hunting aircraft. Washington, the island’s leading arms supplier despite not having formal diplomatic ties, has repeatedly asked Taipei to display its determination to defend itself by boosting military spending. The Chinese government had in May announced the biggest increase in its military budget in recent years, saying its spending in 2007 would rise 17.8 percent from last year to 350.9 billion yuan (about 45 billion dollars),” and the article continued in stating, “Reunification with Taiwan is one of China’s long-term strategic objectives, and analysts have said Beijing is beefing up its military partly to enable it to take the island back by force if necessary. China and Taiwan have been separated since the end of a civil war in 1949, but Beijing still considers the island part of its territory. Taiwan has been led since the turn of the century by independence-leaning President Chen Shui-bian, exacerbating fears in Beijing that the island could break away for good.”[8](#)

The above mentioned issue is extremely important, as it was reported back in 2005 by the *Financial Times* that, “China is prepared to use nuclear weapons against the US if it is attacked by Washington during a confrontation over Taiwan, a Chinese general said on Thursday. ‘If the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition on to the target zone on China’s territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons,’ said General Zhu Chenghu. Gen Zhu was speaking at a function for foreign journalists organised, in part, by the Chinese government. He added that China’s definition of its territory included warships and aircraft,” and the General continued in saying, “If the Americans are determined to interfere [then] we will be determined to respond,” as well as stating, “We . . . will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all of the cities east of Xian. Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds . . . of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese.”[9](#) The article further mentioned, “Gen Zhu is a self-acknowledged ‘hawk’ who has warned that China could strike the US with long-range missiles. But his threat to use nuclear weapons in a conflict over Taiwan is the most specific by a senior Chinese official in nearly a decade.” So, essentially what this is suggesting is that in the case that China attempts to take back Taiwan, which it consistently threatens to do, even if it requires military force, and the US responds militarily in any way, which they have said they would in such an event, even if the act is firing on a Chinese ship, then the response of China would be to engage in nuclear war with the United States.

In early September of 2007, it was reported by the *BBC* that, “Britain has privately complained to Beijing that Chinese-made weapons are being used by the Taleban to attack British troops in Afghanistan. The BBC has been told that on several occasions Chinese arms have been recovered after attacks on British and American troops by Afghan insurgents.”[10](#)

Russia has extremely close ties with Iran, as it was reported back in 2005 that, “Russia

has agreed to sell more than \$1 billion worth of missiles and other defense systems to Iran," and that, "The Interfax and ITAR-Tass news agencies cited unidentified sources in the Russian military-industrial complex as saying that Russian and Iranian officials had signed contracts in November that would send up to 30 Tor-M1 missile systems to Iran over the next two years."<sup>11</sup> In January of 2007, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that, "Voicing extreme concern over Russia's recent sale of advanced anti-aircraft missiles to Iran, senior diplomatic and defense officials warned Moscow Tuesday that the deal could have serious security implications that would even 'get back to Russia.' Senior officials in Jerusalem said they 'were not pleased' with the sale of the anti-aircraft missiles, but that Russia was a sovereign country and they could not intervene. They did, however, issue a warning: 'We hope they understand that this is a threat that could come back to them as well.' Earlier Tuesday, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said Moscow had sent air defense missiles to Teheran, the first high-level confirmation that their delivery took place despite US complaints. Ivanov did not specify how many missile systems had been delivered."<sup>12</sup>

On top of military agreements, Russia and Iran also have close ties economically and politically, and Russia is even helping Iran build a nuclear power plant. It was reported in September of 2007 that, "The Bushehr nuclear power plant that Russia is building in Iran will be commissioned no earlier than the fall of 2008, a source in the Russian nuclear sector said. The date for commissioning the \$1 billion project in the south of the country, the Islamic Republic's first NPP built by Russia, was postponed due to delays in Iranian payments to the contractor."<sup>13</sup> So, clearly, Russia has vested interests inside Iran, and has even gone so far as to help in building a nuclear power plant inside Iran, in a sign of a growing relationship between the two countries, and a very apparent signal that Russia is supporting Iran's efforts to nuclear power, thusly, taking a position in opposition to the Anglo-American Alliance, and even the Franco-German Entente.

This is evident in as much as Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, back in 2006 had advised "to act without delay to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, saying that Iran had 'blatantly crossed the line'," and that "The chancellor compared Iran's nuclear policy to the Nazi party's rise to power in Germany, warning that in the past the nations of the world refused to take a stance against concrete threats, enabling some of history's greatest catastrophes."<sup>14</sup> The newly elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy stated in August of 2007, that, "a diplomatic push by the world's powers to rein in Tehran's nuclear program was the only alternative to 'an Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran'," and that, "In his first major foreign policy speech, Sarkozy emphasized his existing foreign policy priorities, such as opposing Turkish membership of the European Union and pushing for a new Mediterranean Union that he hopes will include Ankara," and the article went on to report that, "Sarkozy said a nuclear-armed Iran would be unacceptable and that major powers should continue their policy of incrementally increasing sanctions against Tehran while being open to talks if Iran suspended nuclear activities." The article then quoted Sarkozy as saying, "This initiative is the only one that can enable us to escape an alternative that I say is catastrophic: the Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran," and he continued, "Russia is imposing its return on the world scene by using its assets, notably oil and gas, with a certain brutality," of which the article continued, "Energy disputes between Russia and neighbors such as Belarus and Ukraine have raised doubts in Europe about Moscow's reliability as a gas exporter. It supplies Europe, via its neighbors, with around a quarter of its gas demands. Sarkozy had warm words for the United States, saying friendship between the two countries was important. But he said he felt free to disagree with American policies, highlighting what he called a lack of leadership on the environment."<sup>15</sup> I find it comical that

Sarkozy talks of Russia saying that, "When one is a great power, one should not be brutal," yet he had 'warm words' for the US, of which I know no other country that is so brutal as a great power.

The *Washington Post* reported in early September of 2007, that, "U.S. plans to site parts of a missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic are 'politically dangerous,' former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said on Saturday. 'From my point of view the missile defense system is politically dangerous. It is perceived as an attempt to isolate Russia, which is not in Europe's political interests,' said Schroeder, who is a personal friend of President Vladimir Putin," and that, "The United States wants to base interceptor missiles and a radar system in Poland and the Czech Republic, saying it needs protection against missile attacks from what it terms 'rogue states' like Iran and North Korea. Russia has reacted furiously, saying the plan will upset a delicate strategic balance between major powers and poses a threat to its own security. Schroeder said the plan was not in the European Union's interests either." The article continued, "Although trade and investment are booming, diplomatic relations between Russia and the European Union have deteriorated sharply over the past year. This is partly because of Russia's squabbles with the Union's new members such as Poland, which were once part of the Soviet bloc and are now wary of Moscow's rising influence."[16](#)

Remember Zbigniew Brzezinski? The Trilateral Commission founder, architect of the Afghan-Soviet War and 'Arc of Crisis' Strategy, who wrote the geo-strategic blueprint for American global hegemony, *The Grand Chessboard*, in which he stated, "Potentially, the most dangerous scenario would be a grand coalition of China, Russia, and perhaps Iran, an 'antihegemonic' coalition united not by ideology but by complementary grievances. It would be reminiscent in scale and scope of the challenge once posed by the Sino-Soviet bloc."[17](#) Well, within ten years of writing his book, Brzezinski's predictions became quite true, as an alternative strategic bloc to the NATO countries has been set up, called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [SCO]. It was officially founded in 2001 [after initial agreements in 1996] by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In 2006, it was reported that, "Six member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Wednesday agreed to stage a joint anti-terror military exercise in 2007 in Russia, according to a joint communiqué," and that, "Except Uzbekistan, other five countries of the SCO held their first-ever joint anti-terror exercise within the framework of the SCO in August 2003, with the first phase in Kazakhstan and the second in China. As new threats and challenges, such as terrorism, separatism, extremism and cross-border crimes, are becoming increasingly prominent, the regional and international cooperation are required."[18](#)

In 2003, it was reported that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), "signed a multilateral economic cooperation Framework Agreement in Beijing on 23 September to 'deepen' their mutual economic connections and 'improve the investment environment'. At the meeting, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made three proposals. He wanted members to set as a long-term objective the establishment of a free trade area within the SCO; elaborate a series of more immediate measures such as improving the flow of goods across the member-states and reducing non-tariff barriers such as customs, quarantine, standards and transport services; and create large projects on economic and technological cooperation, giving priority to those in transportation, energy, telecommunication, agriculture, home appliances, light industry and textiles."[19](#)

Apart from the main members of the SCO, there are also countries which are permitted Observer Status, meaning they won't take part in the war games, but will be official

observers of them and still develop closer ties with the SCO. As the *Guardian* reported in 2006, "At the one day annual summit of the six-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on June 15, more limelight fell on the leader of an observer country than on any of the main participants. That figure happened to be the controversial president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Despite the lowly observer status accorded to his country, Ahmadinejad went on to publicly invite the SCO members to a meeting in Tehran to discuss energy exploration and development in the region. And the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, proposed that the SCO should form an 'energy club'. While making a plea that his country should be accorded full membership of the SCO, the Pakistani president, Pervez Musharraf, highlighted the geo-strategic position of his country as an energy and trade corridor for SCO members. 'Pakistan provides a natural link between the SCO states to connect the Eurasian heartland with the Arabian Sea and South Asia,' he said," and the article continued, "Founded in 1996 primarily to settle frontier problems between China and its post-Soviet neighbors – Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan – the SCO expanded three years later to include Uzbekistan, which does not share common borders with China or Russia, the two countries at the core of the SCO. Since then SCO has developed as an organization concerned with regional security, thus focusing on counter-terrorism, defense, and energy cooperation. Energy-hungry China has its eyes fixed on the large oil and gas reserves that Russia and Kazakhstan possess, and even the modest gas reserves of Uzbekistan." The article further mentioned that, "Iran applied for full membership; as did India," as well as the fact that, "Last year [2005] when the SCO accorded observer status to four countries, it rejected a similar request from the United States," and it continued, "The rising importance and coherence of the SCO worries Washington – as well as its closest Asian ally, Japan. 'The SCO is becoming a rival block to the US alliance,' said a senior Japanese official recently. 'It does not share our values. We are watching it very closely'."[20](#)

Further, it was reported in April of 2006 by the *Asia Times* that, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which maintained it had no plans for expansion, is now changing course. Mongolia, Iran, India and Pakistan, which previously had observer status, will become full members. SCO's decision to welcome Iran into its fold constitutes a political statement. Conceivably, SCO would now proceed to adopt a common position on the Iran nuclear issue at its summit meeting June 15," and that, "Visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mohammadi told Itar-TASS in Moscow that the membership expansion 'could make the world more fair'. And he spoke of building an Iran-Russia 'gas-and-oil arc' by coordinating their activities as energy producing countries. Mohammadi also touched on Iran's intention to raise the issue of his country's nuclear program and its expectations of securing SCO support."[21](#) Although, to this day, Iran's membership has not been made official, making it a de-facto member of the SCO, much in the same sense that Israel is a de-facto member of NATO.[22](#)

In August of 2007, it was reported that, "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said the proposed US missile defense shield in central Europe would pose a threat to Asia. At a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Ahmadinejad said such a plan goes beyond threatening one country and it is a source of concern for most of the continent. Washington is planning to station a radar station in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland. Ahmadinejad added the six SCO member states, including China, are among those countries who are threatened by the US plan. He also criticized the US military attack on Iraq, which has destabilized the entire region. Iran has observer status in the SCO, which groups China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan."[23](#)

As for the relationship between China and Iran, it was reported in 2006 that, “Chinese President Hu Jintao called Friday for closer ties with Iran as he met his Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for the first time, while the United States followed events in Shanghai warily,” and that, “China and Iran have long had close economic ties, especially in the oil and gas fields, and are in negotiations over an energy deal that was tentatively inked in 2004 and could be worth more than 100 billion dollars. As part of the initial memorandum of understanding, Sinopec, China’s largest refiner, would buy 250 million tons of liquefied natural gas over 25 years, which alone could be worth more than 100 billion dollars. However, despite a series of Chinese delegations going to Tehran, the deal has yet to be finalized. Ahmadinejad arrived in China on Wednesday to participate in the leaders’ summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional forum that is increasingly being seen as a counterweight to US influence in Central Asia.”[24](#)

As we can see, this is not simply a strategy of Anglo-American interests at play in the region, as it is always necessary to take a look at the broader geopolitical implications of this region, especially in relation to the European Union, dominated by the Franco-German Entente, and most notably Russia and China. A competition for control of the region is very much underway, as whomever, or whichever powers control Central Eurasia (the Middle East and Central Asia); those same powers will then have control over the world’s primary oil and gas reserves and transportation, and thusly, will exert hegemonic influence over the entire world. With Russia, increasingly gaining strength and influence like never before since the fall of the Soviet Union, China, a rising world power whose thirst and demand for oil is the fastest growing in the world and whose future as a great power depends upon getting its hands on such resources, and with the European Union, a close ally of the Anglo-American Alliance, yet still has its own interests at heart so it, too, is increasingly attempting a relationship with Russia, which has massive natural gas reserves itself. The EU hopes to balance its relationships, so as to always remain on the winning end, however, as time goes forward, it may have to choose sides. Relations between the West, especially the Anglo-Americans, and the former Soviet Union grow tense, the EU may be caught in the middle and China forced to make strategic alliances.

It is clear that future military operations in Central Asia and the Middle East will not be like the previous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, whereas Afghanistan remains under NATO control (the Anglo-American Alliance in collaboration with the Franco-German entente), and Iraq under Anglo-American occupation, but with little more than rhetorical opposition from observing countries around the world. The world accepted the occupation of Afghanistan under the guise of retribution for the 9/11 attacks, and the world stood by as Iraq was put under imperial control. But now the pieces have been set, the world sees the strategy, even though the general public may not, and other great powers have their fates vested in the region, such as Russia, China, the EU and most of the world at large, so to stand idly by now and do nothing as Anglo-American imperial expansion envelopes the entire region would be suicidal. It is in the interest of survival for Russia, China and the EU to maintain influence and control in the region. To do this, each will have to make strategic alliances, as is currently being done.

These activities have caused recent exclamations of a return to the Cold War era, however, I see it as something much more sinister and dangerous. Remember, the Cold War was referred to as “Cold” because it involved no actual fighting between the two main enemies, the United States and the USSR, or the NATO countries against the Warsaw Pact countries. In actuality, I would argue that what we are seeing take place is in fact a return

not to the Cold War, but to the *Great Game*, which was the competition between the British Empire and the Russian Empire for supremacy in Central Asia from the early 1800s arguably up until the end of World War 2, when the Cold War began. One of the major theaters of war between Britain and Russia during the Great Game was Afghanistan, where the first Anglo-Afghan War began in 1838, the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878, a brief alliance occurred between Russia and Britain in the early 20th Century, then the Third Anglo-Afghan War occurred in 1919, otherwise known as the second phase of the Great Game. During the Cold War, or the third phase of the Great Game, Afghanistan was the major theater of operations between the United States (Anglo-Americans) and Russia (Soviet Union) from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, ultimately leading to a collapse of the Soviet Union and an end to the 'Cold War'. Now, after another brief alliance between the Anglo-American Alliance and Russia, just as occurred in the early years of the previous century starting in 1907, leading up to World War 1, it seems that now, in 2007, the fourth phase of this 200-year long Great Game for dominance over Central Asia has begun. Now made all the more dangerous with other great power interests such as the European Union and rising China, not to mention the existence and discussion of the use of nuclear weapons.

### **Rising Tensions and Quiet Mentions of War**

Lately, there has been a significant increase in tensions between the West, predominantly the Anglo-Americans and Iran, and its respective allies, namely, Syria. These escalations in tension and conflict suggest a rapid strategy of progression to an all out war on the Islamic Republic of Iran, and possibly a wider array of countries in the region, leading to a full region-wide war.

In late August of 2007, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported that, "The White House's plans to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps as a terrorist organisation are intended to give the Bush administration cover if it launches military strikes on the Islamic republic, according to a prominent former CIA officer. Robert Baer, who was a high-ranking operative in the Middle East, said last week that senior government officials had told him the administration was preparing for air strikes on the guards' bases and probably also on Iran's nuclear facilities within the next six months," and the article continues, "But among President George W Bush's closest advisers, there is a fierce debate about whether to take unilateral military action independently of any UN security council moves. While Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is set on diplomacy, Vice-President Dick Cheney is understood to favour air strikes. The justification for any attack, according to Mr Baer, would be claims – denied by Iran – that the guards are responsible for the sophisticated armour-penetrating improvised explosive devices that are exacting a heavy toll on US forces in Iraq."[25](#)

On September 2, 2007, the *Sunday Times* reported that, "The Pentagon has drawn up plans for massive airstrikes against 1,200 targets in Iran, designed to annihilate the Iranians' military capability in three days, according to a national security expert. Alexis Debat, director of terrorism and national security at the Nixon Center, said last week that US military planners were not preparing for 'pinprick strikes' against Iran's nuclear facilities. 'They're about taking out the entire Iranian military'," and it continued, "President George Bush intensified the rhetoric against Iran last week, accusing Tehran of putting the Middle East 'under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust'. He warned that the US and its allies would confront Iran 'before it is too late'."[26](#)

A September 3 article in the *Sunday Telegraph* stated, "In a nondescript room, two blocks from the American Capitol building, a group of Bush administration staffers is

gathered to consider the gravest threat their government has faced this century: the testing of a nuclear weapon by Iran. The United States, no longer prepared to tolerate the risk that Iranian nuclear weapons will be used against Israel, or passed to terrorists, has already launched a bombing campaign to destroy known Iranian nuclear sites, air bases and air defence sites. Iran has retaliated by cutting off oil to America and its allies, blockading the Straits of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf bottleneck, and sanctioned an uprising by Shia militias in southern Iraq that has shut down 60 per cent of Iraq's oil exports. The job of the officials from the Pentagon, the State Department, and the Departments of Homeland Security and Energy, who have gathered in an office just off Massachusetts Avenue, behind the rail terminus, Union Station, is to prevent a spike in oil prices that will pitch the world's economy into a catastrophic spin." The article then said, "The good news is that this was a war game; for those who fear war with Iran, the less happy news is that the officials were real. The simulation, which took four months, was run by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank with close links to the White House. Its conclusions, drawn up last month and seen by The Sunday Telegraph, have been passed on to military and civilian planners charged with drawing up plans for confronting Iran. News that elements of the American government are working in earnest on how to deal with the fallout of an attack on Iran come at a tense moment."[27](#)

A report in the *Sunday Telegraph* stated that, "Senior American intelligence and defence officials believe that President George W Bush and his inner circle are taking steps to place America on the path to war with Iran, The Sunday Telegraph has learnt. Pentagon planners have developed a list of up to 2,000 bombing targets in Iran, amid growing fears among serving officers that diplomatic efforts to slow Iran's nuclear weapons programme are doomed to fail. Pentagon and CIA officers say they believe that the White House has begun a carefully calibrated programme of escalation that could lead to a military showdown with Iran," and that, "Now it has emerged that Condoleezza Rice, the secretary of state, who has been pushing for a diplomatic solution, is prepared to settle her differences with Vice-President Dick Cheney and sanction military action. In a chilling scenario of how war might come, a senior intelligence officer warned that public denunciation of Iranian meddling in Iraq - arming and training militants - would lead to cross border raids on Iranian training camps and bomb factories. A prime target would be the Fajr base run by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds Force in southern Iran, where Western intelligence agencies say armour-piercing projectiles used against British and US troops are manufactured." The article continued, "US action would provoke a major Iranian response, perhaps in the form of moves to cut off Gulf oil supplies, providing a trigger for air strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities and even its armed forces. Senior officials believe Mr Bush's inner circle has decided he does not want to leave office without first ensuring that Iran is not capable of developing a nuclear weapon."[28](#)

The *New Yorker Magazine* reported in late August of 2007 that, "If there were a threat level on the possibility of war with Iran, it might have just gone up to orange. Barnett Rubin, the highly respected Afghanistan expert at New York University, has written an account of a conversation with a friend who has connections to someone at a neoconservative institution in Washington," which revealed that, "They [the source's institution] have 'instructions' (yes, that was the word used) from the Office of the Vice-President [Dick Cheney] to roll out a campaign for war with Iran in the week after Labor Day; it will be coordinated with the American Enterprise Institute, the Wall Street Journal, the Weekly Standard, Commentary, Fox, and the usual suspects. It will be heavy sustained assault on the airwaves, designed to knock public sentiment into a position from which a war can be maintained. Evidently they

don't think they'll ever get majority support for this—they want something like 35-40 percent support, which in their book is 'plenty'," and it continued stating, "It follows the pattern of the P.R. campaign that started around this time in 2002 and led to the Iraq war. The President's rhetoric on Iran has been nothing short of bellicose lately, warning of 'the shadow of a nuclear holocaust'."[29](#)

On September 10, *Reuters* reported that, "The Pentagon is preparing to build a military base near the Iraq-Iran border to try to curtail the flow of advanced Iranian weaponry to Shiite militants across Iraq, the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday in its online edition. Quoting Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, the commander of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, the Journal said the Pentagon also plans to build fortified checkpoints on major highways leading from the Iranian border to Baghdad, and install X-ray machines and explosives-detecting sensors at the only formal border crossing between the two countries."[30](#) On the same day, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported that, "Iran has established a sophisticated spying operation at the head of the Arabian Gulf in a move which has significantly heightened tensions in its standoff with the United States. The operation, masterminded by the country's elite Revolutionary Guard, includes the construction of a high-tech spying post close to the point where Iranian forces kidnapped 15 British naval personnel in March. The move has forced British and American commanders to divert resources away from protecting oil platforms in the Gulf from terrorist attack and into countering the new Iranian threat," and it continued, "The US military says that the spying post, built on the foundations of a crane platform sunk during the Iran-Iraq war, is equipped with radar, cameras and forward facing infra-red devices to track the movement of coalition naval forces and commercial shipping in the northern Arabian Gulf. Commanders fear that one of the main purposes of the Iranian operation is to enable the Revolutionary Guard to intercept more coalition vessels moving through the disputed waters near the mouth of the Shatt al Arab waterway south of the Iraqi city of Basra."[31](#)

Incidentally, two days later, *Raw Story* ran an article stating, "As tensions between the United States and Iran increases, military action along the Iran-Iraq border intensifies. The latest moves come from America's primary ally in its invasion of Iraq: Britain. Ostensibly to guard against importation of Iranian weapons and fighters targeting Western troops in Iraq, the UK is sending up to 350 troops to the Iranian border instead of bringing them home, The Independent of London reports Wednesday." This follows much discussion recently that the UK, under the new unelected Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was preparing to withdraw from Iraq, leaving the US alone. In fact, the announcement had been made that British troops were to be returning home from Basra, the British-controlled Iraqi city, and as *Raw Story* pointed out, "The troop move was requested by US commanders, the paper says, and it will delay — perhaps indefinitely — the homecoming of 250 British troops who were told just days ago that they would be returning to the UK as part of a drawdown of forces in Iraq," and that "Prime Minister Gordon Brown initiated the drawdown, and about 500 British troops completed their withdrawal from Basra Palace, their last remaining base in the city, to an airport on the city's outskirts. The move was expected to be the final stage in Britain's complete extraction from Iraq. Wednesday's report follows on the heels of news that US troops would be establishing a base on the border to guard against Iranian-imported weapons.

Tensions between the US and Iran have gone from bad to dismal in recent years, with some fearing all-out war will erupt between the two countries, and the top US commander in Iraq has refused to rule out that possibility. US Army Gen. David Petraeus demurred Tuesday

when he was asked by Sen. Joseph Lieberman whether the war should be expanded 'in Iranian territory.' And Petraeus 'strongly implied' that action against Iran would be necessary soon, The Independent reported." On top of this, it was further pointed out that, "Along with British and US troops, Georgia recently sent about 1,200 extra troops to Iraq to patrol the border with Iran."[32](#)

Further, *Press TV* reported that, "Britain is planning to increase its naval presence in the Persian Gulf by next year, a top British naval commander in the area has revealed. Deputy Combined Force Commander Royal Navy Commodore Keith Winstanley said Monday that Britain has a range of capabilities deployed at various times in the region ranging between submarines, frigates, and destroyers, and that it plans to increase its naval presence by 2008," and that, "Winstanley, speaking onboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard, added that strategic and economic interests had brought about a policy of engagement by Britain in the region," and the article said at the end, "The last time there were active mine counter-measures in the region was in March of 2003,"[33](#) which, *coincidentally*, was the same month that the war in Iraq began.

Not only are the Anglo-Americans fully on board and preparing for a possible attack on Iran, but even the Franco-German Entente seems to be steadily leaning that direction. French President Nicholas Sarkozy made headlines recently when he "called Iran's nuclear ambition the world's most dangerous problem," and further, "raised the possibility that the country could be bombed if it persisted in building an atomic weapon," as reported by the *Sunday Times*. The article continued, "The biggest challenge to the world was the avoidance of conflict between Islam and the West, President Sarkozy told the annual gathering of French ambassadors. Iran was the crossroads of the Middle East's troubles and its nuclear aims 'are without doubt the most serious crisis that weighs today on the international scene," and that, "A nuclear-armed Iran would be unacceptable and the world must continue to tighten sanctions while offering incentives to Tehran to halt weapons development, he said. 'This initiative is the only one that can enable us to escape an alternative that I say is catastrophic: the Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran,' he said. He did not say who would carry out such an attack, which has been suggested by policy experts in Israel and the US."[34](#) Further, it was reported that, "French Defence Minister Herve Morin warned on Sunday that Iran's nuclear programme posed a 'major risk' to the stability of the Gulf region. 'It is necessary to make Iran understand that the nuclear risk creates a major risk of destabilising the region,' Morin told journalists as he wrapped up a visit to the Gulf state of Qatar."[35](#)

On September 14, it was reported that, "Germany denied on Friday that it wanted to hold off on sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme. The government dismissed a report on the US TV channel Fox that it had broken ranks with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and wanted to delay any sanctions to allow a deal struck between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency on August 21 to take effect," and it continued, quoting the German foreign ministry spokesman, "Germany is prepared to take the necessary steps against Iran, if necessary," and that, "The five permanent Security Council members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — plus Germany are due to meet to discuss a new draft UN resolution on sanctions against Iran on September 21 in Washington. Iran maintains that its nuclear programme is aimed at generating electricity but the United States accuses Tehran of covertly developing atomic weapons."[36](#)

Another conflict, which is directly related to the growing Iranian conflict, has been

accumulating significance in the region, as it was reported that, "Syria accused Israel of bombing its territory on Thursday [September 6] and said it could respond to the Jewish state's 'aggression and treachery'," and further, "Israel declined to comment on the charge by Syria, which said no casualties or damage were caused. The Syrian accusation was partly responsible for triggering a rise in world oil prices of more than \$1.40 a barrel."[37](#) Another report stated that, "Syria is mulling a 'series of responses' after Israeli warplanes violated its airspace this week, Vice President Faruq al-Shara said in an interview with an Italian newspaper published Saturday. 'I can say now that in Damascus a series of responses is being examined at the highest political and military levels. The results will not take long in coming'."[38](#)

*Press TV* reported that, "Syria says Israel is planning to wage another war in the region after the Israeli army staged military exercises on the Golan Heights. The state-run Syrian daily al-Thawra said on Sunday that a recent war game by the Israeli military on the occupied Golan Heights has sent a clear message reflecting Israel's intention for waging a new war in the region."[39](#) Another report states that, "Tehran has announced its readiness to assist Damascus by all means to counter the violation of Syrian airspace by Israeli warplanes. Iran's ambassador to Syria, Mohammad-Hassan Akhtari said the Zionist Regime's provocative moves had prompted Tehran to offer help to the Syrian government. Earlier Thursday, Syria's official News Agency reported that several Israeli fighter jets had bombed Syrian territories. However, the Syrian army successfully forced the Israeli warplanes out of the Syrian airspace."[40](#)

A September 12 report stated that, "Israel recently carried out reconnaissance flights over Syria, taking pictures of possible nuclear installations that Israeli officials believed might have been supplied with material from North Korea, The New York Times reported Thursday. A US administration official said Israeli officials believed that North Korea might be unloading some of its nuclear material on Syria, the Times reported," and it quoted an *unnamed* official, stating, "The Israelis think North Korea is selling to Iran and Syria what little they have left," and the article further said, "A US defense official confirmed Tuesday that Israel carried out an air strike well inside Syria last week, apparently to send Damascus a message not to rearm Hezbollah in Lebanon. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, did not know the target of the strike, which was conducted Thursday, but said the US military believed it was to send a message to the Syrians."[41](#)

The *Sunday Times* later reported that, "It was just after midnight when the 69th Squadron of Israeli F15Is crossed the Syrian coast-line. On the ground, Syria's formidable air defences went dead. An audacious raid on a Syrian target 50 miles from the Iraqi border was under way," and that, "Ten days after the jets reached home, their mission was the focus of intense speculation this weekend amid claims that Israel believed it had destroyed a cache of nuclear materials from North Korea," and it continued, "The Syrians were also keeping mum. 'I cannot reveal the details,' said Farouk al-Sharaa, the vice-president. 'All I can say is the military and political echelon is looking into a series of responses as we speak. Results are forthcoming.' The official story that the target comprised weapons destined for Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Lebanese Shi'ite group, appeared to be crumbling in the face of widespread scepticism.

Andrew Semmel, a senior US State Department official, said Syria might have obtained nuclear equipment from 'secret suppliers', and added that there were a 'number of foreign technicians' in the country. Asked if they could be North Korean, he replied: 'There are North Korean people there. There's no question about that'," and further, "According to Israeli

sources, preparations for the attack had been going on since late spring, when Meir Dagan, the head of Mossad, presented Olmert with evidence that Syria was seeking to buy a nuclear device from North Korea."[42](#)

It was then reported that, "An official Syrian daily warned on Sunday that US 'lies' over nuclear cooperation with North Korea could serve as a pretext for an attack on Syria following an Israeli violation of its airspace," and that, "Syria has said its air defences fired on Israeli warplanes which dropped munitions deep inside its territory in the early hours of September 6, triggering intense media speculation about the action. Israel has not confirmed the incident and kept up a policy of official silence, with the only details on the mysterious attack coming from foreign media reports citing anonymous officials."[43](#)

### **Call It What You Want, It's All Just a Game**

As the prospect of a US-led war on Iran increases by the day, it is vital to understand the history of such actions. This was my intent in writing this essay, as to understand current crises and conflicts evolving in the region, it is important to examine the historical context of such crises over the past 200 years. Dating from the *Great Game* between the British and Russian empires for control of Central Eurasia, namely fighting for control in Afghanistan and Iran, the reasons behind the Great Game were simply stated as for maintaining hegemonic control. With brief alliances generating between Britain and Russia, formed for strategic conveniences, namely to counter rising German influence in the region in the lead up to World War 1 and during World War 2, the Great Game continued after the Second World War under a different name, the *Cold War*. For a new century, it was necessary to give a hundred year old strategy a new name, as especially after World War 2, the concepts of hegemony and expansion of control, imperialism in general, were not well received, considering the world just came out of Hitler's attempt at such a strategy. In 1947, India gained independence from the British Empire, instigating the collapse of its imperial hegemony across the globe.

It was at this time, however, that the United States was now in the most pivotal position to exert its hegemony across the globe. With its extensive ties to Great Britain, the British latched onto the Americans in the Anglo-American Alliance, allowing not only for the US to protect US hegemony and interests abroad, but also British. To do this, however, there needed to be an excuse, as the world would not accept another global hegemon for the sake of hegemony. Thus, the *Cold War* came into being. Under the guise of deterring the spread of Communism under the auspices of the 'Domino Theory', the US managed to expand and protect Anglo-American hegemony around the globe. The Cold War was simply the third phase of the Great Game, as it applied the same strategies used for the previous hundred years, just under a new name and justified under a new threat.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, bringing an end to the Cold War, a *New World Order* began to form, the birth pangs of which were felt in the Middle East. This *New World Order* of creating a new global structure, of a more integrated global society, still has many conflicts arising out of it. After World War 1, the League of Nations was created in the hopes of securing a more integrated global community, which ultimately failed with the start of World War 2, after which the United Nations was created to serve the same purpose. Out of each world war, we see the move to create a more global society. Now, after the Cold War ended, we have a new conflict arising between the West and the East. This new conflict is about gaining supremacy in the *New World Order*, as many great powers seek to sway the balance away from a US-dominated New World Order, and towards a Russian or Chinese New World Order.

In the year 2000, then Chinese President, “Jiang Zemin called for joint efforts of the people of all countries to establish a fair and equitable new international political and economic order,” and he further stated, “With the collapse of the centuries-long colonialist system and the end of half-a-century Cold War, it has become increasingly difficult for hegemonism and power politics to go on and for the very few big powers or blocs of big powers to monopolize international affairs and control the fate of other countries.”<sup>44</sup> In 2005, both China and Russia “issued a joint statement on a new world order in the 21st century, setting forth their common stand on major international issues, such as UN reforms, globalization, North-South cooperation, and world economy and trade. The statement was signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and visiting Chinese President Hu Jintao after their talks. During their talks, the two leaders discussed ways to further enhance the strategic and cooperative partnership between China and Russia, and exchanged views on major regional and international issues,” and that “The joint statement said the two countries are determined to strengthen their strategic coordination in international affairs.”<sup>45</sup> More recently, in 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin called “for a radical overhaul of the world’s financial and trade institutions to reflect the growing economic power of emerging market countries – including Russia. Mr Putin said the world needed to create a new international financial architecture to replace an existing model,” and as the *Financial Times* further reported, Putin’s “apparent challenge to western dominance of the world economic order came at a forum in St Petersburg designed to showcase the country’s economic recovery. Among 6,000 delegates at the biggest business forum ever held in post-Soviet Russia were scores of international chief executives including heads of Deutsche Bank, BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Nestlé, Chevron, Siemens and Coca-Cola. Business deals worth more than \$4bn were signed at the conference – including an order by Aeroflot for Boeing jets – as executives said they were continuing to invest in Russia despite deteriorating relations with the west. Mr Putin’s hosting of the forum capped a week in which he dominated the international stage. He warned last Monday that Russia might target nuclear missiles at Europe if the US built a missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic,” and Putin’s “speech on financial institutions suggested that, along with an aggressive recent campaign against US ‘unilateralism’ in foreign policy, he was also seeking to challenge western dominance of the world economic order.”<sup>46</sup>

So clearly, from this last statement especially, we can see that both China and Russia are not opposed to forming a New World Order, which would be largely based on international institutions and integration, both economically and politically, but they are opposed to the West’s dominance of such a world order, and instead, seek to **challenge** that dominance with their own. Ultimately, the goals are similar, but the methods of getting there is where the West and the East differ. As the above *Financial Times* article mentioned, large global corporations are still investing in Russia, despite recent setbacks in certain areas, which shows the support for the process of globalization, which has thusly shaped the current world order. International corporations have no allegiance to people or national identities, but rather seek to exert their control across the entire globe, and will support any nations with great influence, so that with the battle for control in shaping the New World Order, the corporations will always be on the winning side. As the multinational corporations seek a more integrated global society, they must first gain control of the world markets, integrating the economies first. With economic integration, political and cultural will follow. The challenge for the great powers of the world is which ones will be dominant in this process, and thusly, which ones will have dominant control over the New World Order.

Out of conflict, comes societal reorganization. We seem to rapidly be heading toward

another World War, which would have its starting point with an attack on Iran. Talk of a 'new Cold War' is misleading, as if any conflict occurs with Iran, if the US attacks the Islamic Republic, there will be nothing *Cold* about it. This new conflict, the fourth phase of the *Great Game*, will give rise to competition between the great powers for control over the Middle East and Central Eurasia in order to achieve hegemony in the New World Order. It is likely that a New Great Game will lead to a New World War, out of which will rise the *New World Order*. Which ever great powers come out of the next war as the victors, if indeed there are any, it is likely that it will be that power which will lead the New World Order.

As I have mentioned Zbigniew Brzezinski much in this essay, as his relevance to American hegemonic strategy is almost unparalleled, apart from other figures like Henry Kissinger, I feel it is relevant to end with a discussion on testimony that Brzezinski recently gave to the US Senate. In February of 2007, Brzezinski, "the national security adviser in the Carter administration, delivered a scathing critique of the war in Iraq and warned that the Bush administration's policy was leading inevitably to a war with Iran, with incalculable consequences for US imperialism in the Middle East and internationally," and Brzezinski was quoted as saying about the Iraq war, "Undertaken under false assumptions, it is undermining America's global legitimacy. Its collateral civilian casualties as well as some abuses are tarnishing America's moral credentials. Driven by Manichean principles and imperial hubris, it is intensifying regional instability," and he continued, describing what he termed a "plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran", of which he said would involve, "Iraqi failure to meet the benchmarks, followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure, then by *some provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the US* **blamed on Iran**, culminating in a 'defensive' US military action against Iran that plunges a lonely America into a spreading and deepening quagmire eventually ranging across Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan." [Emphasis added].[47](#)

Brzezinski's startling warning should not be taken for granted. Even though many factions of the ruling class are divided, for example someone like Brzezinski, who is very much opposed to the neo-conservatives, they are all still playing the same game. The game is hegemony and empire, the only difference is that some people and some countries have different methods of playing. In previous centuries, the battle for control of Central Eurasia was called what it was, *the Great Game*, a game for control, a game for power. The difference between two hundred years ago and today, is that we are in a much more globalized, integrated society, which has turned this **Great game** into, as Brzezinski aptly named his blueprint for American hegemony, **the Grand Chessboard**. It's no longer simply just a *great* game, but is now simply a board game for the global ruling class. Sacrificing pawns, a simple act for them, can be seen in the eyes of the moral society as the destruction of entire nations and peoples.

There's only so many players in this game, and they all have the same aim, just different methods of getting there. The unfortunate aspect of this, is that the people of the world are being tossed around like pawns in a chess game. The world is meant for all people, not just a select few, to inhabit and have a say in. So, if these people want to play games, let's put them back in the playground, because their mentality has yet to surpass that of children during recess.

Mahatma Gandhi, the man who led India to independence from the British Empire, once said, "Remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible but in the end, they always fall — think of it, ALWAYS."

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