

Sham US Proposal to Iran

Media Distortions designed to hide Washington's real intentions toward Iran

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It may be a new month, but it's the same old Wall Street Journal trumpeting the latest US gambit designed to hide its real intentions toward Iran. Again it was in a front page feature story on June 1 headlined: "In Shift, U.S. Offers to Talk to Iran, Aiming to Bolster Allies' Cohesion." The WSJ is never up to explaining the real motive behind the latest ploy and instead falsely claims it's "a nod to European allies' desire to offer carrots as well as sticks to steer Iran away from its efforts to produce weapons-grade uranium." So to achieve that supposed end, the US has now said it will join with the European-led "negotiations" currently ongoing and actually talk to the Iranians. One has to be impressed with such professed generosity, which, in fact, is just more barely disguised US audacity with a heavy dose of mendacity.

Don't be misled and believe this is a genuine step forward as surely it's not. It's simply just the latest ploy and example of US deceit designed to solidify support among its European allies as well as try to convince the Chinese and Russians to come aboard. It's unlikely they will as those two countries would have a lot to lose should they agree to what the US, in fact, has in mind which has nothing to do with Iran's legal right to enrich uranium for its commercial nuclear program. The Iranians are a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and under its rules are behaving in full compliance with it and doing so no differently than all other countries that have signed it and have their own nuclear reactors for commercial use.

The Real US Intentions Toward Iran: Unreported in the Wall Street Journal and the Rest of the Dominant Corporate Media

So if the latest diplomatic effort is, in fact, couched in deceit, what are the real US intentions. The best way to explain it is to examine the recent past and show how the US public face and pronouncements usually hide its real motives and plans which are quite different and not at all in the spirit of diplomacy. They're also never reported on the pages of the WSJ or elsewhere in the US corporate media.

We need only revisit the run-up to the ongoing Iraq war (the same is true for Afghanistan) to see how the US used one ploy after another to move closer to its fixed plan to invade and occupy the country whatever Saddam was willing to agree to. So after Saddam bowed to virtually everything asked of him, it was to no avail. New demands replaced the old ones complied with until the bar was raised higher than Saddam could reach hard as he might try – to be able to prove a negative: that he had no so-called "weapons of mass destruction" which we knew at the time he didn't and now everyone knows it. So just as the "now you see 'em, now you don't WMDs" were not a casus belli to attack Iraq, so too US hostility toward Iran has nothing to do with the country's supposed "nuclear threat." In both cases,

the issue was and is regime change and the US wanting control of both countries' immense oil reserves.

One more example is how the US negotiated with Slobodon Milosovic in the run-up to the "shock and awe" assault against Serbia and Kosovo in 1999. While Saddam was accused of being a threat he couldn't disprove, Milosovic was offered a final proposal he couldn't accept – an ironic twist to how a local "Godfather" will make an offer that can't be refused. It was the so-called Rambouillet accords of March, 1999, a take-it-or-leave-it offer that no sane or responsible leader would ever agree to. Had he done it, he'd have surrendered his country's sovereignty to a NATO military occupation force that would have had the right to unimpeded access throughout the FRY including its airspace and territorial waters and use any area or facilities therein to support its operations. In addition, it would have had the right to do as it wished with no regard to the country's laws and would require the FRY to adhere to NATO's full authority. It was an offer deliberately designed to be rejected to give the US-led NATO force an excuse to attack, which it did in full force for 79 days, decimating the country, its infrastructure, its people and from which it's yet to recover seven years later.

The war had nothing to do with Milosevic's supposed recalcitrance, and everything to do with US imperial aims – to breakup the country, remove a leader who refused to sell out his nation's sovereignty, establish a US military presence in the region and facilitate the transshipment of oil and gas through pipelines that would pass through the Balkans. The WSJ never reported this and neither did the rest of the corporate media.

To offer closure to the Milosevic chapter, the WSJ posted a front page four-line statement on June 1 from the Hague inquiry into his death. In it, it simply said he died from a fatal heart attack brought on by "smoking and self-medication," not the UN's refusing him treatment in Russia. Even in death, the NATO-created kangaroo International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) wouldn't let him rest in peace and instead refused to acknowledge its own role in causing Milosevic's death. It was the court that created the conditions that worsened his health and then denied him the right to the medical treatment he sought and needed. Milosevic clearly died either from gross neglect or from something more sinister.

So now we can fast-forward to the present as the US casts its imperial eye on Iran which is at the head of its target queue along with Venezuela to be discussed below. The Wall Street Journal was in full battle mode on June 1 both on its front and editorial page lashing out at Iran's mullahs but not particularly supporting the administration's effort. The editorial page is especially truculent and painful to read except for those who love far right ideology with no give at all to more moderate views. Today it states that the US "offer has one big virtue: ending the three-year pretense that the so-called EU 3 – Britain, France and Germany – had any chance of ending Iran's nuclear ambitions." It then goes on to say "Condi's gambit could help to expose Iran's real intentions should it refuse to negotiate seriously." The Journal editorial writers especially never miss a chance to take a swipe at the Iranian leadership, and in this editorial lashed out with a whole array of them. I'm still reeling from the impact, but when they calmed down a bit they added: "We suppose it would serve Mr. Burns (US Undersecretary of State) right if he has to negotiate with this zealot (Iranian President Ahmadinejad), except that the entire State Department seems almost as zealous in its pursuit of any kind of deal."

There's even more from a none too happy Journal editorial writer: "Perhaps the most dispiriting part of this new diplomacy is the signal it will send to Iran's internal opposition.

The regime is widely unpopular, but it will use this implicit U.S. recognition to show that it has earned new world respect. It will also demand that the U.S. cease its support for 'democrats' inside the country.....We hope Mr. Bush has vetoed that kind of 'appeasement.' We hope, too, that he'll continue to put pressure on the mullahs by interdicting Iranian 'terror' financing, and shipping under the Proliferation Security Initiative, where warranted." They wrap up their savage invective by accusing Iran (with no evidence, of course,) of a "relentless drive for a nuclear weapon" and then taking a final jab at Ms. Rice saying if her gambit fails "she'll have succeeded mainly in giving the mullahs more time to become a terrorist nuclear power." I need to catch my breath.

The WSJ is accusing Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons and by implication an intent to use them. It hardly matters to its editorial writer that there is no evidence whatever Iran is doing anything illegal or that it ever suggested it intends to use a nuclear weapon if it ever had one. As stated above, Iran is in full compliance with NPT and is entirely within its legal right to pursue its commercial nuclear program. It's uranium enrichment activities are no different than what all other countries are now doing that have their own commercial nuclear programs including India, Pakistan and Israel. Those countries are close US allies, they've all got illegal nuclear weapon stockpiles, they're all in violation of NPT rules and haven't signed the treaty, and the US has no fault to find with them. Double standards never get in the way of US foreign policy and are never mentioned on the pages of the Wall Street Journal. It's also never mentioned that since Persia was renamed Iran in 1934, the country never initiated a hostile action against a neighbor or any other country. It fought a long and costly war against Iraq in the 1980s after Iraq began it and did so with strong US urging and support.

The Journal also failed to report today that for years Iran has sought rapprochement with the US and has made numerous offers of reconciliation to achieve it. They were all rebuffed as the US since the 1980s had a firm policy of rejecting any normalization of relations with Iran and never deviated from it. Throughout that period and especially under the Bush administration, the US without compromise wants nothing other than regime change, the end of an Islamic Iranian state, and the transformation of the country to one totally under US control (as it was under the infamous Shah from 1953 to 1979) along with all other oil producers in the strategically important Middle East.

You'll never learn than on the pages of the Wall Street Journal, particularly from its far right hostile to reason editorial page. Nor will you learn the Bush administration has already signed off on a "shock and awe" assault against Iran using so-called "bunker-buster" mini-nukes I've written about before. I've called these industrial strength nuclear bombs that are anything but mini and that will spread deadly toxic radiation over a vast area depending only on how many of them may be used against whatever targets the US has in mind if it launches an attack. Based on the May 31 Rice proposal, the US may first prefer moving incrementally against Iran by imposing tough economic sanctions prior to launching an attack at a later time. It's hardly likely the Iranians will accept the US overture as it demands they give up their legal right to develop their commercial nuclear program which they've stated many times they have no intention of doing. So far the Iranian response has been less than positive and some in the country have called it propaganda. I prefer calling it what it is - another Washington stunt or head fake designed to make the administration look conciliatory when, in fact, its real intentions are unalterably hostile.

In a late development on June 2, the foreign ministers of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany meeting in Vienna announced they had reached an

agreement on a (so far unrevealed) “package of incentives” to Iran if it was willing to give up its (legal) right to enrich uranium for its commercial nuclear program. It stated further if Iran declined to do so (which it no doubt will), the Security Council will take further (unspecified) action.

What Else Is the Wall Street Journal Not Reporting

You’ll also never learn about the Pentagon’s “long war” from the WSJ that Washington believes will dominate the next 20 or even 30 years. The Pentagon calls it a global integrated military, financial and diplomatic war against al-Qaida and its affiliates that will affect the next generation as the “cold war” defined the baby boomers. It laid all this out in its latest Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). This is to be part of what the Bush administration calls a “global war on terror” which, by implication, is a war on Islam. It’s also defined as a long war between the forces of civilization and democracy against the terrorists. What it is, in fact, is a 20 or 30 year grand imperial plan for US global dominance to be enforced with unchallengeable military power. It’s the vision first detailed in 1997 by the neoconservative Project for a New American Century (PNAC) that’s now become policy.

The PNAC plan began in Afghanistan and Iraq, is likely next to include hostile action against Iran, and if that isn’t enough will also for certain include a fourth attempt to oust Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and possibly Bolivian President Evo Morales with him. I’ve written in some detail about this before, and as I follow events in Venezuela and listen to the belligerent rhetoric from high level officials in the Bush administration it becomes even clearer something is brewing and may unfold sooner than one might think.

Yesterday classes at the University of the Andes were suspended again as student disturbances and protests continued in Merida (in the country’s southwest) for the fourth straight business day. The Venezuelan daily, El Mundo, reported similar actions were taking place at other universities with a possible student national demonstration and march across the country to follow. Government officials called these actions a deliberate provocation to destabilize the country and do it to embarrass and discredit the Chavez government as it hosts the 141st Extraordinary OPEC Conference in Caracas from June 1 – 3. It likely is and with the US CIA the main instigator using Venezuela proxies to do its dirty work. It may also be further softening up and marshalling of the anti-Chavez forces preparatory to the US initiating its fourth coup attempt which this time may include a military assault and attempted assassination of Hugo Chavez and other close allies. Events unfolding now bear close watching, and the Chavez government must stay on high alert lest it let its guard down and fall prey to the certain coming US assault against it. The stakes are very high for the President and the people of Venezuela. It’s their right to preserve their glorious Bolivarian Revolution now in place and be able to see it grow, spread and be secure from any hostile action against it. This writer makes no pretense in my being in full support of that hope and dream.

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