

The US Nuclear Option and the “War on Terrorism”

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
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The US continues threatening the World with nuclear war. No solution has emerged. Moreover, since the war on Iraq, the antiwar movement is defunct.

The mainstream media has failed to warn public opinion that a US led nuclear attack on North Korea or Iran could evolve towards the unthinkable. In the words of Albert Einstein:

“I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones”.

This is the text I wrote 14 years ago.

Michel Chossudovsky, April 28, 2018

We are the juncture of the most serious crisis in modern history.

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, in the largest display of military might since the Second World War, the Bush Administration has embarked upon a military adventure which threatens the future of humanity.

The multilateral safeguards of the Cold War era with regard to the production and use of nuclear weapons have been scrapped.

While Al Qaeda is presented to public opinion as constituting a nuclear threat, the US Senate has provided a “green light” to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in conventional war theaters against “rogue states” and terrorist organizations.

According to the Pentagon, these weapons are “harmless to civilians”.

Introduction

The wars on Afghanistan and Iraq are part of a broader military agenda, which was launched at the end of the Cold War. The ongoing war agenda is a continuation of the 1991 Gulf War and the NATO led wars in Yugoslavia (1991-2001).

The war on Iraq has been in the planning stages at least since the mid-1990s. A 1995 National Security document of the Clinton administration stated quite clearly that the objective of the war is oil. *“To protect the United States’ uninterrupted, secure U.S. access to oil.”*

In September 2000, a few months before the accession of George W. Bush to the White House, the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) published its blueprint for global domination under the title: “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

The PNAC is a neo-conservative think tank linked to the Defense-Intelligence establishment, the Republican Party and the powerful Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) which plays a behind-the-scenes role in the formulation of US foreign policy.



Source: [Visibility 9-11](#)

The PNAC’s declared objectives are:

- defend the American homeland;
- fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theater wars;
- perform the “constabulary” duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions;
- transform U.S. forces to exploit the “revolution in military affairs;”

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney had commissioned the PNAC blueprint prior to the 2000 presidential elections.

The PNAC outlines a roadmap of conquest.

It calls for “the direct imposition of U.S. “forward bases” throughout Central Asia and the Middle East “with a view to ensuring economic domination of the world, while strangling any potential “rival” or any viable alternative to America’s vision of a ‘free market’ economy” (See Chris Floyd, Bush’s Crusade for Empire, Global Outlook, No. 6, 2003)

Distinct from theater wars, the so-called “constabulary functions” imply a form of global military policing using various instruments of military intervention including punitive bombings and the sending in of US Special Forces, etc.

New Weapons Systems

The PNAC's "revolution in military affairs" (meaning the development of new weapons systems) consists of *the Strategic Defense Initiative*, the concurrent weaponization of space and the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons.

The Strategic Defense Initiative, (Star Wars), not only includes the controversial "Missile Shield", but also a wide range of offensive laser-guided weapons with striking capabilities anywhere in the world, not to mention instruments of weather and climatic warfare under the High Altitude Auroral Research Program (HAARP). Recent scientific evidence suggests that HAARP is fully operational and has the ability of potentially triggering floods, droughts, hurricanes and earthquakes. From a military standpoint, HAARP is a weapon of mass destruction. Potentially, it constitutes an instrument of conquest capable of selectively destabilizing agricultural and ecological systems of entire regions.

Also contemplated is the Pentagon's so-called *FALCON program*. FALCON is the ultimate New World Order weapons' system, to be used for global economic and political domination. It can strike from the continental US anywhere in the World. It is described as a "global reach" weapon to be used to "react promptly and decisively to destabilizing or threatening actions by hostile countries and terrorist organizations". This hypersonic cruise weapon system to be developed by Northrop Grumman "would allow the U.S. to conduct effective, time-critical strike missions on a global basis without relying on overseas military bases. FALCON would allow the US to strike, either in support of conventional forces engaged in a war theater or in punitive bombings directed against countries that do not comply with US economic and political diktats.

The "Pre-emptive" Use of Nuclear Weapons

The Bush Administration has adopted a first strike "pre-emptive" nuclear policy, which has now received congressional approval. Nuclear weapons are no longer a weapon of last resort as during the Cold War era.

In a classified Pentagon document (Nuclear Posture Review) presented to the US Senate in early 2002, the Bush Administration established so-called "contingency plans" for an offensive "first strike use" of nuclear weapons, not only against the "axis of evil" (Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria and North Korea), but also against Russia and China.

The pre-emptive nuclear doctrine contained in the Nuclear Posture Review is supported by the Republican Party and Washington's conservative think-tanks:

"The Pentagon must prepare for all possible contingencies, especially now, when dozens of countries, and some terrorist groups, are engaged in secret weapon development programs." (quoted in William Arkin, *Secret Plan Outlines the Unthinkable*, Los Angeles Times, 9 March 2002)

While scaling back – in agreement with Russia — on the number of nuclear warheads, the Pentagon's objective is not only to 'modernize' its nuclear arsenal, but also to establish "full spectrum dominance" in outer space. With advanced surveillance equipment and space weaponry, the U.S. would be able to inflict force locally and instantly anywhere in the world, directly from orbiting satellites, using an appropriate level of pain and doing so with impunity.

The US, Britain and Israel have a coordinated nuclear weapons policy. Israeli nuclear warheads are pointed at major cities in the Middle East. The governments of all three countries stated quite openly, in the months leading up to the war on Iraq, that they were prepared to use nuclear weapons “if they are attacked” with so-called “weapons of mass destruction.”

Barely a few weeks following the entry of the US Marines into Baghdad in April 2003, the US Senate Armed Services Committee gave the green light to the Pentagon to develop a new tactical nuclear bomb, to be used in conventional war theaters, “with a yield [of up to] six times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb”.

The “Privatization” of Nuclear War

The August 6, 2003 Hiroshima Day Meeting at Central Command Headquarters

This green light decision of the Senate Armed Services Committee was followed a few months later by a major redefinition of US policy pertaining to nuclear weapons.



On August 6, 2003, the day the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, 58 years ago, a secret meeting was held with senior executives from the nuclear industry and the military industrial complex at Central Command Headquarters at the Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska.

“More than 150 military contractors, scientists from the weapons labs, and other government officials gathered at the headquarters of the US Strategic Command in Omaha, Nebraska to plot and plan for the possibility of “full-scale nuclear war” calling for the production of a new generation of nuclear weapons—more “usable” so-called “mini-nukes and earth penetrating “bunker busters” armed with atomic warheads.” (Alice Slater, [Bush Nuclear Policy A Recipe for National Insecurity](#), August 2003)

The new nuclear policy explicitly involves the large defense contractors in decision-making. It is tantamount to the “privatization” of nuclear war.

Corporations not only reap multibillion-dollar profits from the production of nuclear bombs,

they also have a direct voice in setting the agenda regarding the use and deployment of nuclear weapons.

The Nuclear weapons industry, which includes the production of nuclear devices as well as the missile delivery systems, etc. is controlled by a handful of defense contractors with Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop, Raytheon and Boeing in the lead.

It is worth noting that barely a week prior to August 6 meeting, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) disbanded its advisory committee which provides an “independent oversight” on the US nuclear arsenal, including the testing and/or use of new nuclear devices. (The Guardian, 31 July 2003)

Meanwhile, the Pentagon had unleashed a major propaganda and public relations campaign with a view to upholding the use of nuclear weapons for the “defense of the American Homeland.”

In an utterly twisted logic, nuclear weapons are presented as a means to building peace and preventing “collateral damage”. The Pentagon has intimated, in this regard, that the ‘mini-nukes’ (with a yield of less than 5000 tons) are harmless to civilians because the explosions ‘take place under ground’. Each of these ‘mini-nukes’, nonetheless, constitutes – in terms of explosion and potential radioactive fallout – a significant fraction of the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Formally endorsed by the US Congress in late 2003, the mini-nukes are considered to be “safe for civilians”. Once this assumption has been built into military planning, it constitutes a consensus, which is no longer the object of critical debate. Decisions pertaining to the use of these nuclear weapons will be based on the prior “scientific” assessments underlying this consensus that they are “not dangerous for civilians”.

The propaganda campaign stipulates that the mini-nukes are harmless. Based on this premise, the US Congress has given the “green light”: this new generation of nuclear weapons is slated to be used in the next phase of the war, in “conventional war theaters” (e.g. in the Middle East and Central Asia) alongside conventional weapons.

In December 2003, the US Congress allocated \$6.3 billion solely for 2004, to develop this new generation of “defensive” nuclear weapons.

The overall annual defense budget is in excess of 400 billion dollars, more than the entire Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Russian Federation.

Nuclear Weapons and the “War on Terrorism”

To justify pre-emptive military actions, the National Security Doctrine requires the “fabrication” of a terrorist threat, –ie. “an outside enemy.” It also needs to link these terrorist threats to “State sponsorship” by so-called “rogue states.”

Spelled out in the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS), the preemptive “defensive war” doctrine and the “war on terrorism” against Al Qaeda constitute essential building blocks of the Pentagon’s propaganda campaign. In the wake of September 11, 2001, the nuclear option is intimately related to the “war on terrorism.”

The objective is to present “preemptive military action” –meaning war as an act of “self-

defense” against two categories of enemies, “rogue States” and “Islamic terrorists”, both of which are said to possess weapons of mass destruction:

“The war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise of uncertain duration. ...America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.

...Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They know such attacks would fail. Instead, they rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction (...)

The targets of these attacks are our military forces and our civilian population, in direct violation of one of the principal norms of the law of warfare. As was demonstrated by the losses on September 11, 2001, mass civilian casualties is the specific objective of terrorists and these losses would be exponentially more severe if terrorists acquired and used weapons of mass destruction.

The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction- and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, (...). To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.”¹² ([National Security Strategy](#), White House, 2002)

This “anticipatory action” under the NSS includes the use of tactical nuclear weapons, which are now classified as in theater weapons alongside conventional weapons.



Nuclear weapons are presented as performing defensive functions to be used against so-called “rogue states” and terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda.

The propaganda ploy emanating from the CIA and the Pentagon consists in presenting Al Qaeda as capable of developing a nuclear device. According to a report entitled “Terrorist CBRN: Materials and Effects” by the CIA’s Intelligence Directorate (released 2 months prior to the August 2003 “Hiroshima day” meeting in Nebraska):

“Al Qaeda’s goal is the use of [chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons] to cause mass casualties,...

[Islamist extremists] “have a wide variety of potential agents and delivery means to choose from for chemical, biological and radiological or nuclear (CBRN) attacks,” said the four-page report titled ” (quoted in the Washington Times, 3 June 2003)

Amply documented, the “war on terrorism” is fabricated.

The nuclear threat emanating from Al Qaeda is also fabricated, with a view to justifying Washington’s pre-emptive nuclear policy. Needless to say, the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks have served to galvanize public opinion, particularly in the US, in support of the pre-emptive war doctrine.

While the media has its eyes riveted on Islamic terrorists and Al Qaeda, the threats to global security resulting from Washington’s pre-emptive nuclear doctrine are barely mentioned. Deafening Silence: the August 6 2003 “Hiroshima Day” meeting in Nebraska was not covered by the mainstream media.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, the “war on terrorism” constitutes a cover-up of the broader objectives underlying US military and economic expansionism. The central objective is to eventually destabilize Russia and China.

War and the Economy

The articulation of America’s war agenda coincides with a worldwide economic depression leading to the impoverishment of millions of people.

The economic crisis is the direct result of a macro-economic policy framework under IMF-World Bank-WTO auspices. More generally, trade deregulation, privatisation and downsizing under the neoliberal policy agenda have contributed to the demise of the civilian economy.

The recession hits the civilian sectors of economic activity. It tends to support the growth of the military industrial complex.

The shift towards a war economy has resulted in massive austerity measures applied to all areas of civilian expenditure including public investment in infrastructure and social programs. While the civilian economy plummets, extensive financial resources are funneled towards America’s war machine. In North America and the European Union, State resources which had previously been tagged to finance health and education have been redirected towards defense.

The war economy will not resolve the mounting tide of unemployment. This new direction of the US economy geared towards the military industrial complex, will generate hundreds of billions of dollars of surplus profits, while contributing very marginally to the rehabilitation of the employment of specialised scientific, technical and professional workers laid-off in recent years in the civilian sectors of economic activity.

This redirection of the US economy is motivated by geopolitical and strategic objectives. The most advanced weapons systems are being developed by America’s military-industrial complex with a view to achieving a position of global military and economic dominance, not only in relation to China and Russia, but also in relation to the European Union, which Washington considers a potential encroachment.

Behind America’s so-called “war on terrorism” is the militarization of vast regions of the world.

Since the 1999 war in Yugoslavia, an Anglo-American military axis has developed based on a close coordination between Britain and the U.S. in defense, foreign policy and intelligence.

The defense industries of the US, Britain, Canada and Israel are increasingly integrated.

Under the Trans-Atlantic Bridge, an agreement signed in 1999, British Aerospace Systems Corporation (BAES) has become increasingly integrated into the system of procurement of the US Department of Defense.

In turn, Israel, although not officially part of the Anglo-American axis plays a central strategic role in the Middle East on behalf of Washington.

Europe versus America

A rift in the European defense industry has occurred. There are serious divisions within NATO.

While Britain is firmly aligned with the US, France and Germany have joined hands in the development of a European based weapons arsenal, which challenges the hegemony of the US.

Franco-German integration in aerospace and defence production since 1999 constitutes a response to U.S. dominance in the weapons market. The latter hinges upon the partnership between America's Big Five and Britain's defence industry under the trans-Atlantic bridge agreement.

In 1999, in response to the alliance of British Aerospace with Lockheed Martin, France's Aerospatiale-Matra merged with Daimler's Deutsche Aerospace (DASA) forming the largest European defence conglomerate. And the following year, the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Co. (EADS) was formed integrating DASA, Matra and Spain's Construcciones Aeronauticas, SA.

The Franco-German alliance in military production under EADS, means that Germany (which does not officially possess nuclear weapons) has become a de facto producer of nuclear technology for France's nuclear weapons program. In this regard, EADS already produces a wide range of ballistic missiles, including the M51 nuclear-tipped ballistic submarine-launched ICBMs for the French Navy.

Concluding Remarks

War and globalization go hand in hand. The powers of the Wall Street financial establishment, the Anglo-American oil giants and the U.S.-U.K. defense contractors are indelibly behind this process, which consists in extending the frontiers of the global market system.

The purpose of America's New War is to transform sovereign nations into open territories (free trade areas), both through military means, as well as through the imposition of deadly "free market" reforms.

The objective behind this war is ultimately to re-colonize not only China and the countries of the former Soviet block, but also the entire Middle Eastern region and the Indian peninsula.

Concurrently, Washington's objective is to exert global dominance in military affairs, overshadowing the military capabilities of its European "allies".

The development of America's nuclear arsenal including the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons in conventional war theaters is an integral part of this process.

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About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at crgeditor@yahoo.com

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