

# Why the United States invaded Iraq, and now is thinking about invading Iran

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On April 28th, IAEA released its report on Iran. IAEA reported that: the Agency cannot make a judgment about, or reach a conclusion on, future compliance or intentions. The report came as no surprise to those who have been following the ongoing dispute between Iran, United States and the IAEA.

The United States, for quite some time now, has been accusing Iran of trying to develop Nuclear weapons and Iran has been insisting that its intentions are peaceful and that it is only interested in peaceful use of the Nuclear energy. Iran, to allay the international community's fear, froze its enrichment program and started a series of negotiations with U.K., Germany, and France. However, without the United States these negotiations were not going to produce any results, since it was only the United States that could address the Iranian's national security concerns. Iranian seeing themselves surrounded by American forces wanted a security guarantee that United States would not invade Iran, something that United States was not prepared to give. So the negotiations with the European three failed and Iran resumed its enrichment program. Iran was threatened with Security Council and even invasion without any effect. Now once again there is talk of Security Council resolution under article 7 and continuous threats of invasion. There have even been talks of tactical nuclear strike on suspected Iranian nuclear facilities.

All these events are reminiscent of the negotiations and threats preceding the invasion of Iraq. The unfolding events are so similar that makes one wonder if the Iraq scenario is not being used as a template for Iran. And with what has come to light since the Iraq invasion, we have to assume that like Iraq, the decision to invade Iran has already been taken, and that the E.U. Three negotiations and IAEA are being used to prepare the public for that event. There are already reports of increased U.S. provocations along Iranian borders such as flying unmanned surveillance flight over Iran, and insertion of

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commandos into Iran for intelligence gathering and other activities. The talk of invasion is also accompanied with war games. For example on April 14th, USA Today reported that Amid rising tensions between the United States and Iran over the future of Iran's nuclear program, the Pentagon is planning a war game in July so officials can explore options for a crisis involving Iran.

But this war game is not the first of its kind. According to William M. Arkin of Washington Post, In early 2003, even as U.S. forces were on the brink of war with Iraq, the Army had already begun conducting an analysis for a full-scale war with Iran. The analysis, called TIRANNT, for "theatre Iran near term," was coupled with a mock scenario for a Marine Corps invasion and a simulation of the Iranian missile force. U.S. and British planners conducted a Caspian Sea war game around the same time. And Bush directed the U.S. Strategic Command to draw up a global strike war plan for an attack against Iranian weapons of mass destruction. All of this will ultimately feed into a new war plan for "major combat operations" against Iran that military sources confirm now exists in draft form.

But why did United States attack Iraq and why is she so keen on attacking Iran now? We now know that from the beginning, this administration was looking for any excuse to invade Iraq. Washington has, over time, given a number of different reasons for invading Iraq: starting with Iraq's developing Nuclear weapons, to war on terror, to spreading democracy in the Middle East. All these reasons have proven to be false. Iraq did not possess any Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD); and did not have any link to Al Qaeda. And instead of democracy, Iraqis have had to endure Abu Gharib, car bombs, shortage of basic services such as electricity, clean water, and health care. None of the ministries are functioning properly and in addition Iraq has to deal with half a million displaced people. There is also talk of partitioning of Iraq. On top of all this, the Iraqis now face a possible bloody civil war.

After spending over 320 Billion dollars for Iraq war (officially so far) and with no end in sight, why is this administration insisting in starting another catastrophic war in the Middle East?

There have been a number of theories put forward by various groups and individuals. These theories include: crusade against Islam, control of oil reserve, checking the resurgence of Russia and rise of China, and furthering the interests of Israel.

The answer probably contains some of all of the above. However two theories stand out as more plausible.

Fight for oil reserves

The profits of five oil companies combined (American: ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Conoco, British: Shell and British Petroleum) in 2005 was

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111 billion dollars. And these profits are about to go through the roof. The reason? Production can not keep-up with demand, and even if it could, there isn't enough oil to satisfy all, at present prices.

Oil companies' valuations are based on those companies' access to oil reserves. Iraq and Iran combined have over 20% of the world's total proven oil reserves. Imagine what having access to those reserves will do for the valuation of American oil companies, not to mention their profits.

There is also the matter of consumption. United States consumes fully 25 percent of the world oil supplies. China and India are growing rapidly and their economies consume more and more oil. China currently consumes 8.2 percent of the world's oil production. Soon it will increase to 10 or even 14 percent. Where is that oil going to come from? Is United States willing to reduce its share for China? It is highly improbable.

Recently, President Bush held a television conference where he assured the public that Americans' dependence on Oil soon would be over. He spoke of great new technologies and fuel sources that were just around the corner. What he forgot to mention was that there are 600 million cars in the world today that run on petrol, and it is estimated that if the present trend continues, by 2030, the number of cars in the world will reach 1.2 billion.

Just to change the engines of the existing 600 million cars will take years, not to mention all the petrol stations and the support facilities that have to be modified for this to work. There is also more in a barrel of oil than petrol for our cars. We need such oil derivatives as jet fuel, Kerosene, lubricants, feedstock, asphalt, etc., for our industries to function.

Currently over 60% of the world's oil reserves are in Middle East. Four countries in the region, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Kuwait, have over half of the world's proven oil reserves.

If we keep the world's oil consumption at its current level then the Middle East can theoretically supply the world with oil, at its current production rate, for another 80 years.

But the fact is that in 15 years the North American and Asia Pacific oil reserves will be depleted. This will represent a marked reduction in oil supplies world wide. In other words within 15 years if we do not increase oil production drastically in the Middle East and elsewhere, world will face tremendous oil shortages. Increasing oil production is not that easy either. Each Oil field has an optimum production rate. If one tries to go beyond that rate and tries to sustain high production rate, one damages the oil field and thereby substantially reducing the amount of recoverable oil. This problem is well documented by the oil industry.

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But what about the new oil discoveries? Well there have been very little new discoveries; the future doesn't seem that bright either. According to Energy Information Administration's (EIA) analysis of the long term world oil supply we can expect to discover only 10% more oil in the future. Even this 10% is disputed. The Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (ASPO) which closely follows the development in the oil industry, Foundation of Economic Sustainability (FEASTA), and others see an alarming trend in the future oil discovery and production.

If one looks at the amount of oil discovered in the years from 1930 to the present one sees a clear downward trend in new discoveries; this in spite of using more money and better technologies.

In March 2005, HIS energy (an international oil consultancy firm) did a comprehensive analysis of the world oil supply and demand and reached the following conclusion: that even if one includes Natural Gas production and all other liquid fuels in our total available supplies, there will be a shortage anytime from 2011 to 2020.

### Israel

There is no doubt that Israel has a powerful lobby in the United States. There are currently over 50 Jewish organisations that directly or indirectly lobby for Israel. The Israeli influence is well known, but few are willing to openly talk about it, especially in the United States and Europe. The Israeli dimension is particularly difficult to mention, for if one dares to state the obvious, one is branded as anti-Semite or a terrorist sympathiser. The Jewish lobby also can make life very unpleasant for those who dare to mention the extent of its influence in U.S. and other countries. There are still a few brave souls such as John Mearsheimer (Professor of Political Science and the co-director of the Program on International Security Policy at the University of Chicago) and Stephen Walt (Belfer Professor of International Relations and Academic Dean of Harvard University) in the U.S. that are willing to speak-out. In March 2006, they wrote an article titled the Israel Lobby in which they question the United States policies in the Middle East. Here is a section of their article:

Israel receives about \$3 billion in direct assistance each year, roughly one-fifth of the foreign aid budget, and worth about \$500 a year for every Israeli. This largesse is especially striking since Israel is now a wealthy industrial state with a per capita income roughly equal to that of South Korea or Spain.

Other recipients get their money in quarterly instalments, but Israel receives its entire appropriation at the beginning of each fiscal year and can thus earn interest on it. Most recipients of aid given for military purposes are required to spend all of it in the US, but Israel is allowed to use roughly 25 per cent of its allocation to subsidise its own defence industry. It is the only recipient that does not have

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to account for how the aid is spent, which makes it virtually impossible to prevent the money from being used for purposes the US opposes, such as building settlements on the West Bank. Moreover, the US has provided Israel with nearly \$3 billion to develop weapons systems, and given it access to such top-drawer weaponry as Blackhawk helicopters and F-16 jets. Finally, the US gives Israel access to intelligence it denies to its Nato allies and has turned a blind eye to Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons.

### The Israel Connection

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt are not anti-Semites nor are they uninformed individuals. What they are saying is that United States Middle Eastern policy is in the interest of Israel and counterproductive for the United States.

We now know that as soon as the Bush administration came to power, it started looking for an excuse to invade Iraq. It used every possible propaganda tool under the sun to get the UN to sanction the invasion of Iraq, and when it didn't succeed, it went ahead and invaded Iraq anyway. The people in U.S. pushing for an invasion, the so-called Neo-Cons were at the forefront of disseminating misinformation in anyway they could. But to understand part of their agenda we have to go back to 1996.

In 1996 the newly elected prime minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu commissioned a study group called "Study Group on a New Israeli Strategy Toward 2000" to craft a strategy for Israel in the coming decades. The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies which included Richard Perle, James Colbert, Charles Fairbanks, Douglas Feith, Robert Loewenberg, David Wurmser, and Meyrav Wurmser, created the Israel's strategy paper titled: *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm*.

The paper contains six pages of recommendations for Benjamin Netanyahu and some of the more relevant suggestions are presented below:

We have for four years pursued peace based on a New Middle East. We in Israel cannot play innocents abroad in a world that is not innocent. Peace depends on the character and behaviour of our foes. We live in a dangerous neighbourhood, with fragile states and bitter rivalries. Displaying moral ambivalence between the effort to build a Jewish state and the desire to annihilate it by trading "land for peace" will not secure "peace now." Our claim to the land – to which we have clung for hope for 2000 years—is legitimate and noble. It is not within our own power, no matter how much we concede, to make peace unilaterally. Only the unconditional acceptance by Arabs of our rights, especially in their territorial dimension, "peace for peace," is a solid basis for the future.

Syria challenges Israel on Lebanese soil. An effective approach, and

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one with which American can sympathize, would be if Israel seized the strategic initiative along its northern borders by engaging Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran, as the principal agents of aggression in Lebanon, including by:

- striking Syria's drug–money and counterfeiting infrastructure in Lebanon, all of which focuses on Razi Qanan.
- paralleling Syria's behaviour by establishing the precedent that Syrian territory is not immune to attacks emanating from Lebanon by Israeli proxy forces.
- striking Syrian military targets in Lebanon, and should that prove insufficient, striking at select targets in Syria proper.

Work closely with Turkey and Jordan to contain, destabilize, and roll–back some of its most dangerous threats. This implies clean break from the slogan, "comprehensive peace" to a traditional concept of strategy based on balance of power.

Change the nature of its relations with the Palestinians, including upholding the right of hot pursuit for self defence into all Palestinian areas and nurturing alternatives to Arafat's exclusive grip on Palestinian society.

Given the nature of the regime in Damascus, it is both natural and moral that Israel abandon the slogan "comprehensive peace" and move to contain Syria, drawing attention to its weapons of mass destruction program, and rejecting "land for peace" deals on the Golan Heights.

Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq – an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right – as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions. Jordan has challenged Syria's regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq. This has triggered a Jordanian–Syrian rivalry to which Asad has responded by stepping up efforts to destabilize the Hashemite Kingdom, including using infiltrations. Syria recently signalled that it and Iran might prefer a weak, but barely surviving Saddam, if only to undermine and humiliate Jordan in its efforts to remove Saddam.

It is interesting to note that many of the co–authors of this strategy paper are Jewish Americans and not Israelis. Below you will find a very short description of a few co–authors.

Richard Perle has served in important government posts under various administrations. He was Secretary of Defence under Reagan administration and Chairman of the Defence policy Advisory Committee (2001–2003) under Bush Administration. He is also the signatory of

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Project for the New American Century, a think-tank institute and one of the main organisations pushing for invasion of Iran. Perle is currently a resident fellow at the conservative think-tank American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. He sits also on the board of advisors of Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA).

Douglas Faith served at Defense Department as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, under Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz. Faith had previously served in the Reagan administration, starting off as Middle East specialist at the National Security Council (1981–82) and then transferring to the Defense Department where he spent two years as staff lawyer for Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle. He is the director of Foundation for Jewish Studies, and former advisor to Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA).

David Wurmser, Dick Cheney's Middle East adviser, was the Special Adviser to Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security (2001–2003). He is also member of Board of Directors of U.S. Committee for a Free Lebanon.

One can produce a very long list of influential people in United States (e.g., Paul Wolfowitz –current World Bank President and Undersecretary of Defence for Policy from 1989–93) that work very hard to safeguard Israel's interests.

To be continued

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