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War against Iran

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The launching of an outright war using nuclear warheads against Iran is now in the final planning stages.

Coalition partners, which include the US, Israel and Turkey are in "an advanced stage of readiness".

Various military exercises have been conducted, starting in early 2005. In turn, the Iranian Armed Forces have also conducted large scale military maneuvers in the Persian Gulf in December in anticipation of a US sponsored attack.

Since early 2005, there has been intense shuttle diplomacy between Washington, Tel Aviv, Ankara and NATO headquarters in Brussels.

In recent developments, CIA Director Porter Goss on a mission to Ankara, requested Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan "*to provide political and logistic support for air strikes against Iranian nuclear and military targets."* Goss reportedly asked *"for special cooperation from Turkish intelligence to help prepare and monitor the operation."* (DDP, 30 December 2005).

In turn, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has given the green light to the Israeli Armed Forces to launch the attacks by the end of March:

All top Israeli officials have pronounced the end of March, 2006, as the deadline for launching a military assault on Iran.... The end of March date also coincides with the IAEA report to the UN on Iran's nuclear energy program. Israeli policymakers believe that their threats may influence the report, or at least force the kind of ambiguities, which can be exploited by its overseas supporters to promote Security Council sanctions or justify Israeli military action.

(James Petras, Israel's War Deadline: Iran in the Crosshairs, Global Research, December 2005)

The US sponsored military plan has been endorsed by NATO, although it is unclear, at this stage, as to the nature of NATO's involvement in the planned aerial attacks.

"Shock and Awe"

The various components of the military operation are firmly under US Command, coordinated by the Pentagon and US Strategic Command Headquarters (USSTRATCOM) at the Offutt Air Force base in Nebraska.

The actions announced by Israel would be carried out in close coordination with the Pentagon. The command structure of the operation is centralized and ultimately Washington will decide when to launch the military operation.

US military sources have confirmed that an aerial attack on Iran would involve a large scale deployment comparable to the US "shock and awe" bombing raids on Iraq in March 2003:

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American air strikes on Iran would vastly exceed the scope of the 1981 Israeli attack on the Osiraq nuclear center in Iraq, and would more resemble the opening days of the 2003 air campaign against Iraq. Using the full force of operational B-2 stealth bombers, staging from Diego Garcia or flying direct from the United States, possibly supplemented by F-117 stealth fighters staging from al Udeid in Qatar or some other location in theater, the two-dozen suspect nuclear sites would be targeted.

Military planners could tailor their target list to reflect the preferences of the Administration by having limited air strikes that would target only the most crucial facilities ... or the United States could opt for a far more comprehensive set of strikes against a comprehensive range of WMD related targets, as well as conventional and unconventional forces that might be used to counterattack against US forces in Iraq

(See Globalsecurity.org at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iran-strikes.htm

In November, US Strategic Command conducted a major exercise of a *"global strike plan"* entitled "*Global Lightening".* The latter involved a simulated attack using both conventional and nuclear weapons against a *"fictitious enemy".*

Following the *"Global Lightening"* exercise, US Strategic Command declared an advanced state of readiness (See our analysis below)

While Asian press reports stated that the "fictitious enemy" in the Global Lightening exercise was North Korea, the timing of the exercises, suggests that they were conducted in anticipation of a planned attack on Iran.

Consensus for Nuclear War

No dissenting political voices have emerged from within the European Union.

There are ongoing consultations between Washington, Paris and Berlin. Contrary to the invasion of Iraq, which was opposed at the diplomatic level by France and Germany, Washington has been building "a consensus" both within the Atlantic Alliance and the UN Security Council. This consensus pertains to the conduct of a nuclear war, which could potentially affect a large part of the Middle East Central Asian region.

Moreover, a number of frontline Arab states are now tacit partners in the US/Israeli military project. A year ago in November 2004, Israel's top military brass met at NATO headqaurters in Brtussels with their counterparts from six members of the Mediterranean basin nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania. A NATO-Israel protocol was signed. Following these meetings, joint military exercises were held off the coast of Syria involving the US, Israel and Turkey. and in February 2005, Israel participated in military exercises and "anti-terror maneuvers" together with several Arab countries.

The media in chorus has unequivocally pointed to Iran as a *"threat to World Peace".*

The antiwar movement has swallowed the media lies. The fact that the US and Israel are planning a Middle East nuclear holocaust is not part of the antiwar/anti- globalization agenda.

The *"surgical strikes"* are presented to world public opinion as a means to preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

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We are told that this is not a war but a military peace-keeping operation, in the form of aerial attacks directed against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Mini-nukes: "Safe for Civilians"

The press reports, while revealing certain features of the military agenda, largely serve to distort the broader nature of the military operation, which contemplates the preemptive use of tactical nuclear weapons.

The war agenda is based on the Bush administration's doctrine of "preemptive" nuclear war under the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review.

Media disinformation has been used extensively to conceal the devastating consequences of military action involving nuclear warheads against Iran. The fact that these surgical strikes would be carried out using both conventional and nuclear weapons is not an object of debate.

According to a 2003 Senate decision, the new generation of tactical nuclear weapons or "low yield" "mini-nukes", with an explosive capacity of up to 6 times a Hiroshima bomb, are now considered "safe for civilians" because the explosion is underground.

Through a propaganda campaign which has enlisted the support of "authoritative" nuclear scientists, the mini-nukes are being presented as an instrument of peace rather than war. The low-yield nukes have now been cleared for "battlefield use", they are slated to be used in the next stage of America's "war on Terrorism" alongside conventional weapons:

Administration officials argue that low-yield nuclear weapons are needed as a credible deterrent against rogue states.[Iran, North Korea] Their logic is that existing nuclear weapons are too destructive to be used except in a full-scale nuclear war. Potential enemies realize this, thus they do not consider the threat of nuclear retaliation to be credible. However, low-yield nuclear weapons are less destructive, thus might conceivably be used. That would make them more effective as a deterrent. (Opponents Surprised By Elimination of Nuke Research Funds, Defense News, November 29, 2004)

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. Estimates of yield for Nagasaki and Hiroshima indicate that they were respectively of 21000 and 15000 tons (http://www.warbirdforum.com/hiroshim.htm)

In other words, the low yielding mini-nukes have an explosive capacity of one third of a Hiroshima bomb.

The earth-penetrating capability of the [nuclear] B61-11 is fairly limited, however. Tests show it penetrates only 20 feet or so into dry earth when dropped from an altitude of 40,000 feet. Even so, by burying itself into the ground before detonation, a much higher proportion of the explosion energy is transferred to ground shock compared to a surface bursts. Any attempt to use it in an urban environment, however, would result in massive civilian casualties. Even at the low end of its 0.3-300 kiloton yield range, the nuclear blast will simply blow out a huge crater of radioactive material, creating a lethal gamma-radiation field over a large area.
http://www.fas.org/faspir/2001/v54n1/weapons.htm

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Gbu 28 Guided Bomb Unit-28 (GBU-28)

The new definition of a nuclear warhead has blurred the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons:

'It's a package (of nuclear and conventional weapons). The implication of this obviously is that nuclear weapons are being brought down from a special category of being a last resort, or sort of the ultimate weapon, to being just another tool in the toolbox,' said Kristensen. (*Japan Economic News Wire,* op cit)

We are a dangerous crossroads: military planners believe their own propaganda.

The military manuals state that this new generation of nuclear weapons are "safe" for use in the battlefield. They are no longer a weapon of last resort. There are no impediments or political obstacles to their use. In this context, Senator Edward Kennedy has accused the Bush Administration for having developed *"a generation of more useable nuclear weapons."*

The international community has endorsed nuclear war in the name of World Peace.

"Making the World safer" is the justification for launching a military operation which could potentially result in a nuclear holocaust.

But nuclear holocausts are not front page news! In the words of Mordechai Vanunu,

"The Israeli government is preparing to use nuclear weapons in its next war with the Islamic world. Here where I live, people often talk of the Holocaust. But each and every nuclear bomb is a Holocaust in itself. It can kill, devastate cities, destroy entire peoples." (See interview with Mordechai Vanunu, December 2005).

Space and Earth Attack Command Unit

A preemptive nuclear attack using tactical nuclear weapons would be coordinated out of US Strategic Command Headquarters at the Offutt Air Force base in Nebraska, in liaison with US and coalition command units in the Persian Gulf, the Diego Garcia military base, Israel and Turkey.

Under its new mandate, USSTRATCOM has a responsibility for *"overseeing a global strike plan"* consisting of both conventional and nuclear weapons. In military jargon, it is slated to play the role of *"a global integrator charged with the missions of Space Operations; Information Operations; Integrated Missile Defense; Global Command & Control; Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance; Global Strike; and Strategic Deterrence.... "*

In January 2005, at the outset of the military build-up directed against Iran, USSTRATCOM was identified as *"the lead Combatant Command for integration and synchronization of DoD-wide efforts in combating weapons of mass destruction."*

To implement this mandate, a brand new command unit entitled Joint Functional Component Command Space and Global Strike, or JFCCSGS was created.

JFCCSGS has the mandate to oversee the launching of a nuclear attack in accordance with the 2002 Nuclear

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Posture Review, approved by the US Congress in 2002. The NPR underscores the pre-emptive use of nuclear warheads not only against *"rogue states"* but also against China and Russia.

Since November, JFCCSGS is said to be in *"an advance state of readiness"* following the conduct of relevant military exercises. The announcement was made in early December by U.S. Strategic Command to the effect that the command unit had achieved *"an operational capability for rapidly striking targets around the globe using nuclear or conventional weapons."* The exercises conducted in November used *"a fictional country believed to represent North Korea"* (see David Ruppe, 2 December 2005):

The new unit [JFCCSGS] has *'met requirements necessary to declare an initial operational capability'* as of Nov. 18. A week before this announcement, the unit finished a command-post exercise, dubbed Global Lightening, which was linked with another exercise, called Vigilant Shield, conducted by the North American Aerospace Defend Command, or NORAD, in charge of missile defense for North America.

'After assuming several new missions in 2002, U.S. Strategic Command was reorganized to create better cooperation and cross-functional awareness,' said Navy Capt. James Graybeal, a chief spokesperson for STRATCOM. *'By May of this year, the JFCCSGS has published a concept of operations and began to develop its day-to-day operational requirements and integrated planning process.'*

'The command's performance during Global Lightning demonstrated its preparedness to execute its mission of proving integrated space and global strike capabilities to deter and dissuade aggressors and when directed, defeat adversaries through decisive joint global effects in support of STRATCOM,' he added without elaborating about 'new missions' of the new command unit that has around 250 personnel.

Nuclear specialists and governmental sources pointed out that one of its main missions would be to implement the 2001 nuclear strategy that includes an option of preemptive nuclear attacks on 'rogue states' with WMDs. (*Japanese Economic Newswire,* 30 December 2005)

CONCEPT PLAN (CONPLAN) 8022

JFCCSGS is in an advanced state of readiness to trigger nuclear attacks directed against Iran or North Korea.

The operational implementation of the Global Strike is called CONCEPT PLAN (CONPLAN) 8022. The latter is described as *"an actual plan that the Navy and the Air Force translate into strike package for their submarines and bombers,"* (Ibid).

CONPLAN 8022 is *'the overall umbrella plan for sort of the pre-planned strategic scenarios involving nuclear weapons.'*

'It's specifically focused on these new types of threats â€" Iran, North Korea â€" proliferators and potentially terrorists too,' he said. 'There's nothing that says that they can't use CONPLAN 8022 in limited scenarios against Russian and Chinese targets.'(According to Hans Kristensen, of the Nuclear Information Project, quoted in Japanese economic News Wire, op cit)

The mission of JFCCSGS is to implement CONPLAN 8022, in other words to trigger a nuclear war with Iran.

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The Commander in Chief, namely George W. Bush would instruct the Secretary of Defense, who would then instruct the Joint Chiefs of staff to activate CONPLAN 8022.

CONPLAN is distinct from other military operations. It does not contemplate the deployment of ground troops.

CONPLAN 8022 is different from other war plans in thatit posits a small-scale operation and no "boots on the ground." The typical war plan encompasses an amalgam of forces â€" air, ground, sea â€" and takes into account the logistics and political dimensions needed to sustain those forces in protracted operations.... The global strike plan is offensive, triggered by the perception of an imminent threat and carried out by presidential order. (William Arkin, *Washington Post,* May 2005)

The Role of Israel

Since late 2004, Israel has been stockpiling US made conventional and nuclear weapons systems in anticipation of an attack on Iran. This stockpiling which is financed by US military aid was largely completed in June 2005. Israel has taken delivery from the US of several thousand "smart air launched weapons" including some 500 'bunker-buster bombs', which can also be used to deliver tactical nuclear bombs.

The B61-11 is the "nuclear version" of the "conventional" BLU 113, can be delivered in much same way as the conventional bunker buster bomb. (See Michel Chossudovsky, http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO112C.html , see also http://www.thebulletin.org/article_nn.php?art_ofn=jf03norris) .

Moreover, reported in late 2003, Israeli Dolphin-class submarines equipped with US Harpoon missiles armed with nuclear warheads are now aimed at Iran. (See Gordon Thomas, http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/THO311A.html)

Late April 2005. Sale of deadly military hardware to Israel. GBU-28 Buster Bunker Bombs:

Coinciding with Putin's visit to Israel, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (Department of Defense) announced the sale of an additional 100 bunker-buster bombs produced by Lockheed Martin to Israel. This decision was viewed by the US media as *"a warning to Iran about its nuclear ambitions."*

The sale pertains to the larger and more sophisticated "Guided Bomb Unit-28 (GBU-28) BLU-113 Penetrator" (including the WGU-36A/B guidance control unit and support equipment). The GBU-28 is described as "a special weapon for penetrating hardened command centers located deep underground. The fact of the matter is that the GBU-28 is among the World's most deadly "conventional" weapons used in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, capable of causing thousands of civilian deaths through massive explosions.

The Israeli Air Force are slated to use the GBU-28s on their F-15 aircraft.

(See text of DSCA news release at http://www.dsca.osd.mil/PressReleases/36-b/2005/Israel_05-10_corrected.pdf

Extension of the War

Tehran has confirmed that it will retaliate if attacked, in the form of ballistic missile strikes directed against Israel (CNN, 8 Feb 2005). These attacks, could also target US military facilities in Iraq and Persian Gulf, which would

immediately lead us into a scenario of military escalation and all out war.

At present there are three distinct war theaters: Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. The air strikes against Iran could contribute to unleashing a war in the broader Middle East Central Asian region.

Moreover, the planned attack on Iran should also be understood in relation to the timely withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, which has opened up a new space, for the deployment of Israeli forces. The participation of Turkey in the US-Israeli military operation is also a factor, following last year's agreement reached between Ankara and Tel Aviv.

More recently, Tehran has beefed up its air defenses through the acquisition of Russian 29 Tor M-1 anti-missile systems. In October, with Moscow`s collaboration, *"a Russian rocket lifted an Iranian spy satellite, the Sinah-1, into orbit."* (see Chris Floyd)

The Sinah-1 is just the first of several Iranian satellites set for Russian launches in the coming months.

Thus the Iranians will soon have a satellite network in place to give them early warning of an Israeli attack, although it will still be a pale echo of the far more powerful Israeli and American space spies that can track the slightest movement of a Tehran mullah's beard. What's more, late last month Russia signed a $1 billion contract to sell Iran an advanced defense system that can destroy guided missiles and laser-guided bombs, the Sunday Times reports. This too will be ready in the next few months. (op.cit.)

Ground War

While a ground war is not envisaged under CONPLAN, the aerial bombings could lead through the process of escalation into a ground war.

Iranian troops could cross the Iran-Iraq border and confront coalition forces inside Iraq. Israeli troops and/or Special Forces could enter into Lebanon and Syria.

In recent developments, Israel plans to conduct military exercises as well as deploy Special Forces in the mountainous areas of Turkey bordering Iran and Syria with the collaboration of the Ankara government:

Ankara and Tel Aviv have come to an agreement on allowing the Israeli army to carry out military exercises in the mountainous areas [in Turkey] that border Iran.

[According to] ... a UAE newspaper ..., according to the agreement reached by the Joint Chief of Staff of the Israeli army, Dan Halutz, and Turkish officials, Israel is to carry out various military manoeuvres in the areas that border Iran and Syria. [Punctuation as published here and throughout.] [Dan Halutz] had gone to Turkey a few days earlier.

Citing certain sources without naming them, the UAE daily goes on to stress: The Israeli side made the request to carry out the manoeuvres because of the difficulty of passage in the mountain terrains close to Iran's borders in winter.

The two Hakari [phonetic; not traced] and Bulo [phonetic; not traced] units are to take part in the manoeuvres that have not been scheduled yet. The units are the most important of Israel's special military units and are charged with

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fighting terrorism and carrying out guerrilla warfare.

Earlier Turkey had agreed to Israeli pilots being trained in the area bordering Iran. The news [of the agreement] is released at a time when Turkish officials are trying to evade the accusation of cooperating with America in espionage operations against its neighbouring countries Syria and Iran. Since last week the Arab press has been publishing various reports about Ankara's readiness or, at least, agreement in principle to carry out negotiations about its soil and air space being used for action against Iran.

(E'temad website, Tehran, in Persian 28 Dec 05, BBC Monitoring Services Translation)

Concluding remarks

The implications are overwhelming.

The so-called international community has accepted the eventuality of a nuclear holocaust.

Those who decide have swallowed their own war propaganda.

A political consensus has developed in Western Europe and North America regarding the aerial attacks using tactical nuclear weapons, without considering their devastating implications.

This profit driven military adventure ultimately threatens the future of humanity.

What is needed in the months ahead is a major thrust, nationally and internationally which breaks the conspiracy of silence, which acknowledges the dangers, which brings this war project to the forefront of political debate and media attentiion, at all levels, which confronts and requires political and military leaders to take a firm stance against the US sponsored nuclear war.

Ultimately what is required are extensive international sanctions directed against the United States of America and Israel.

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