

Building a Justification for Waging War on Iran?

by Prof. Michel Chossudovsky via rialator - globalresearch.ca Sunday, Jun 24 2007, 11:00am
international / imperialism / other press

Bush Directive for a "Catastrophic Emergency" in America

"Another [9/11 type terrorist] attack could create both a justification and an opportunity that is lacking today to retaliate against some known targets" (Statement by Pentagon official, leaked to the Washington Post, 23 April 2006)

The US media consensus is that "the United States faces its greatest threat of a terrorist assault since the September 11 attacks" (USA Today, 12 February 2006) The American Homeland is threatened by "Islamic terrorists", allegedly supported by Tehran and Damascus.

America is under attack" by an illusive "outside enemy".

Concepts are turned upside down. War becomes Peace. "Offense" becomes a legitimate means of "self-defense". In the words of President Bush:

"Against this kind of enemy, there is only one effective response: We must go on the offense, stay on the offense, and take the fight to them." (President George W. Bush, CENTCOM Coalition Conference, May 1, 2007)

The intent is to seek a pretext to wage a preemptive war.

A "terrorist attack on America" could be used to justify, in the eyes of an increasingly credulous public opinion, on "humanitarian grounds", the launching of a major theater war directed against Iran and Syria.

Allegedly supported by Iran, the terrorists are said to possess nuclear capabilities. They are supposedly planning to explode "radiological dispersion devices" (RDD) or "dirty bombs" in densely populated urban areas in the US. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell had already forewarned in 2003 that, "It would be easy for terrorists to cook up radioactive 'dirty' bombs to explode inside the U.S. ... How likely it is, I can't say..." (10 February 2003).

The sheer absurdity that Al Qaeda might have advanced capabilities to wage a nuclear attack on America is, nonetheless, pervasive in US media reports. Moreover, numerous drills and exercises, simulating a terrorist attack using nuclear devices, have been conducted in recent years, creating the illusion that "the threat is real":

"What we do know is that our enemies want to inflict massive casualties and that terrorists have the expertise to invent a wide range of attacks, including those involving the use of chemical, biological, radiological and even nuclear weapons. ... [E]xploding a small nuclear weapon in a major city could do incalculable harm to hundreds of thousands of people, as well as to businesses and the economy,...(US Congress, House

History

Consistently since 9/11, the Bush administration has reminded Americans of the danger of a "Second 9/11":

"The near-term attacks ... will either rival or exceed the 9/11 attacks... And it's pretty clear that the nation's capital and New York city would be on any list..." (Former DHS Secretary Tom Ridge, December 2003)

"You ask, 'Is it serious?' Yes, you bet your life. People don't do that unless it's a serious situation." (Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, December 2003)

"... Credible reporting indicates that Al Qaeda is moving forward with its plans to carry out a large-scale attack in the United States in an effort to disrupt our democratic process... (Former DHS Secretary Tom Ridge, 8 July 2004)

"The enemy that struck on 9/11 is weakened and fractured yet it is still lethal and planning to hit us again." (Vice President Dick Cheney, 7 January 2006)

"We are still a nation at risk. Part of our strategy, of course, is to stay on the offense against terrorists who would do us harm. In other words, it is important to defeat them overseas so we never have to face them here. Nevertheless, we recognize that we've got to be fully prepared here at the homeland." (President George W. Bush February 8, 2006)

"Our main enemy is al Qaeda and its affiliates. Their allies choose their victims indiscriminately. They murder the innocent to advance a focused and clear ideology. They seek to establish a radical Islamic caliphate, so they can impose a brutal new order on unwilling people, much as Nazis and communists sought to do in the last century. This enemy will accept no compromise with the civilized world.... (President George W. Bush, CENTCOM Coalition Conference, May 1, 2007)

We're fighting a war on terror because the enemy attacked us first, and hit us hard. ... Al Qaeda's leadership has said they have the right to "kill four million Americans,... For nearly six years now, the United States has been able to defeat their attempts to attack us here at home. Nobody can guarantee that we won't be hit again. ... (Vice President Dick Cheney, United States Military Academy Commencement, West Point, New York, May 26, 2007)

In the immediate wake of the invasion of Iraq (April 2003), various national security procedures were put in place which focused on the eventuality of a "Second 9/11". These initiatives in the area of Homeland Security outlined the precise circumstances under which martial law could be declared in the case of a second major terrorist attack on America.

Under martial law, the military would take over several functions of civilian government including justice and law enforcement.

A terrorist attack on American soil of the size and nature of September 11, would lead ---according to former CENTCOM Commander, General Tommy Franks-- to the downfall of democracy in America. In an interview in December 2003, which was barely mentioned in the US media, General Franks outlined a scenario, which would result in the suspension of the Constitution and the installation of military rule in America:

"[A] terrorist, massive, casualty-producing event [will occur] somewhere in the Western world - it may be in the United States of America - that causes our population to question our own Constitution and to begin to militarize our country in order to avoid a repeat of another mass, casualty-producing event." (General Tommy Franks Interview, Cigar Aficionado, December 2003)

Franks was obliquely alluding to a "Second 9/11" terrorist attack, which could be used to galvanize US public opinion in support of a military government and police state.

The "terrorist massive casualty-producing event" was presented by General Franks as a crucial political turning point. The resulting crisis and social turmoil is intended to facilitate a major shift in US political, social and institutional structures, leading to the suspension of constitutional government.

US Northern Command

The Administration's "Catastrophic Emergency" procedures are intimately related to military planning at the level of the Pentagon. In this regard, the formation of US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) in April 2002 (based at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado) constitutes an important landmark in the evolving relationship between the Military and Homeland Security.

US Northern Command was created as a new command structure with the explicit mandate to defend the Homeland against foreign terrorists.

This mandate is defined in the Pentagon's "Joint Doctrine for Homeland Security (JP-26)". Even in the case where the "outside enemy" is fabricated (and this is known at the highest levels of the military-intelligence apparatus), a military coup d'Etat characterized by detailed command military/security provisions, would become operational almost immediately.

NORTHCOM's "Command Mission" encompasses a number of "non-military functions" including "crisis management" and "domestic civil support". Under Northcom jurisdiction, the latter imply a process of "military support to federal, state and local authorities in the event of a terror attack."

NORTHCOM has a mandate to "defend the homeland" against an illusive "outside enemy" (Al Qaeda), which is said to be threatening the security of America. According to Frank Morales, "the scenario of a military take-over of America is unfolding." And Northern Command is the core military entity in this takeover and militarization of civilian institutions.

Dick Cheney's "Contingency Plan"

Following the creation of NORTHCOM in 2002, "Defense of the Homeland" functions -including domestic counter-terrorism and national emergency procedures-- have become increasingly integrated into the broader process of military planning by the Pentagon .

This integration should be understood as part of the Pentagon's preemptive war doctrine, where a presumed or planned attack on the Homeland by "Islamic terrorists" becomes a justification for waging an "offensive" (defined as defensive) war in the Middle East.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks were used to wage war on Afghanistan, using the pretext (without a shred of evidence) that the Afghan Taliban government was a "State sponsor" of the 9/11 attacks.

In August 2005, Vice President Dick Cheney is reported to have instructed USSTRATCOM, based at the Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, to draw up a "Contingency Plan", "to be employed in response to another 9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States". (Philip Giraldi, Attack on Iran: Pre-emptive Nuclear War, The American Conservative, 2 August 2005)

Dick Cheney's "Contingency Plan" was predicated on the preemptive war doctrine. Implied in the "Contingency Plan" was the presumption that Iran would be behind the attacks.

The Vice president's instructions were given to USSTRATCOM, which is in charge of the central planning and coordination of major overseas theater wars, rather than to NORTHCOM, whose mandate consists in defending the North American Homeland against terrorist attacks. .

Cheney's "Contingency Plan" under USSTRATCOM jurisdiction, would draw on the possibility of a "Second 9/11" attack to prepare for a major military operation directed against Iran, while pressure would also be exerted in the corridors of the United Nations on Tehran, in relation to its (non-existent) nuclear weapons program.

What is diabolical in this 2005 decision by the US Vice President is that the justification to wage war on Iran rests on Iran's alleged involvement in a hypothetical terrorist attack on America, which has not yet occurred.

The plan to attack Iran is based on the principle of self defense. It "includes a large-scale air assault on Iran employing both conventional and tactical nuclear weapons." (Philip Giraldi, Attack on Iran: Pre-emptive Nuclear War, The American Conservative, 2 August 2005)

"Several senior Air Force officers involved in the planning are reportedly appalled at the implications of what they are doing—that Iran is being set up for an unprovoked nuclear attack—but no one is prepared to damage his career by posing any objections. (Ibid)

The Pentagon's "Second 9/11"

In early 2006, (former) Secretary Don Rumsfeld approved a far-reaching military campaign plan to fight terrorism around the World, with a view to retaliating in the case of a second major terrorist attack on America. This Pentagon plan was, in essence, an extension of the Second 9/11 "Contingency Plan" agenda announced by Dick Cheney in 2005.

The Pentagon's anti-terrorist plan was outlined in three secret documents, of which excerpts were leaked to the Washington Post.

These three documents consist of an overall "campaign plan" plus two "subordinate plans". The second "subordinate plan" explicitly focuses on the possibility of "Second 9/11" and how a second

major attack on American soil might provide "an opportunity" to extend the US led war in the Middle East into new frontiers:

"[It] sets out how the military can both disrupt and respond to another major terrorist strike on the United States. It includes lengthy annexes that offer a menu of options for the military to retaliate quickly against specific terrorist groups, individuals or state sponsors depending on who is believed to be behind an attack. **Another attack could create both a justification and an opportunity that is lacking today to retaliate against some known targets,** according to current and former defense officials familiar with the plan. (Washington Post, 23 April 2006, emphasis added)

The presumption of this military document, is that a Second 911 attack "which is lacking today" would usefully create both a "justification and an opportunity" to wage war on "some known targets [Iran and Syria]".

National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive, NSPD-51/ HSPD 20

In May 2007, a major presidential National Security Directive is issued, (National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive NSPD 51/HSPD 20),

NSPD 51 / HSPD 20 is a combined National Security Directive emanating from the White House and Homeland Security. It is tailor-made to fit the premises of both the Pentagon's 2006 "Anti-terrorist Plan" as well Vice President Cheney's 2005 "Contingency Plan".

The directive establishes procedures for "Continuity of Government" (COG) in the case of a "Catastrophic Emergency". The latter is defined in NSPD 51/HSPD 20 (henceforth referred to as NSPD 51), as "any incident, regardless of location, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the U.S. population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government functions."

"Continuity of Government," or "COG," is defined in NSPD 51 as "a coordinated effort within the Federal Government's executive branch to ensure that National Essential Functions continue to be performed during a Catastrophic Emergency."

NSPD 51 has barely been reported by the mainstream media. There was no press briefing by the White House or by DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, which would be the normal practice, given the significance and implications of NSPD 51. The text of NSPD /51 HSPD 20, announced by the White House is not even mentioned on the DHS's website.

This Combined Directive NSPD /51 HSPD 20 grants unprecedented powers to the Presidency and the Department of Homeland Security, overriding the foundations of Constitutional government. NSPD 51 allows the sitting president to declare a "national emergency" without Congressional approval. The adoption of NSPD 51 would lead to the de facto closing down of the Legislature and the militarization of justice and law enforcement:

The President shall lead the activities of the Federal Government for ensuring constitutional government. In order to advise and assist the President in that function, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counter

terrorism (APHS/CT) is hereby designated as the National Continuity

Coordinator. The National Continuity Coordinator, in coordination with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA), without exercising directive authority, shall coordinate the development and implementation of continuity policy for executive departments and agencies. The Continuity Policy Coordination Committee (CPCC), chaired by a Senior Director from the Homeland Security Council staff, designated by the National Continuity Coordinator, shall be the main day-to-day forum for such policy coordination. (National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive NSPD 51/HSPD 20, emphasis added)

NSPD 51 grants extraordinary Police State powers to the White House and Homeland Security (DHS), in the event of a "Catastrophic Emergency". The Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counter terrorism (APHS/CT), who is slated to play a key role in the eventuality of Martial law, is a key White House adviser, Frances Fragos Townsend.

Foreign Policy Implications of NSPD 51

While NSPD 51 has the appearances of a domestic national security decision, it is, nonetheless, an integral part of US foreign policy. It belongs to a longstanding military national security agenda. Were NSPD 51 to be invoked, Vice President Dick Cheney, who constitutes the real power behind the Executive, would essentially assume de facto dictatorial powers, circumventing both the US Congress and the Judiciary, while continuing to use President George W. Bush as a proxy figurehead.

NSPD 51, while bypassing the Constitution, nonetheless, envisages very precise procedures which guarantee the powers of the Vice President:

"This directive shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with, and facilitates effective implementation of, provisions of the Constitution concerning succession to the Presidency or the exercise of its powers, and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 (3 U.S.C. 19), with consultation of the Vice President and, as appropriate, others involved. Heads of executive departments and agencies shall ensure that appropriate support is available to the Vice President and others involved as necessary to be prepared at all times to implement those provisions." (NSPD 51, op cit.)

In the case of a "Catastrophic Emergency", NSPD 51 could potentially be used to justify the implementation of retaliatory military action against Iran in accordance with Dick Cheney's 2005 "Contingency Plan". If the "Catastrophic Emergency" were to be triggered by a terrorist attack, NSPD-51 could be invoked as **"the justification and ... opportunity ... to retaliate against some known targets"** as outlined by the Pentagon in its 2006 anti-terrorist plan.

The broader question is whether the occurrence of this "Catastrophic Emergency " is actually being planned by the Pentagon, with a view to justifying an attack on Iran.

The Role of the US Military in the Case of a "Catastrophic Emergency"

NSPD 51 would instate martial law under the authority of the White House and the DHS. It would suspend constitutional government under the provisions of Continuity in Government (COG).

The provisions of NSPD 51 are consistent with an existing body of legislation and regulations pertaining to alleged terrorist attacks on the Homeland and the declaration of martial law.

Since 2003, following the invasion of Iraq, Homeland Security (DHS) has contemplated time and again the possibility of a so-called code red alert "scenario" --using a potential or possible Al Qaeda terrorist attack on America soil as a pretext for implementing martial law. (For further details, see Michel Chossudovsky, America's "War on Terrorism", Global Research, 2005)

Since 2003, the DHS has conducted several "anti-terrorist exercises" under the TOPOFF (top officials) program. The latter consisted in organizing anti-terror preparedness in a military style exercise with the participation of federal, State and local level governments. Various attack "scenarios" by foreign terrorists using weapons of mass destruction had been envisaged.

Code Red Alert was initially established under the provisions of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-3 (March 2002). Under the existing legislation, a code red alert would trigger conditions for the "temporary" suspension of the normal functions of civilian government. Several functions of civilian administration would be closed down, others could be transferred to the jurisdiction of the military. More generally, the procedure would disrupt government offices, businesses, schools, public services, transportation, etc.

According to (former) Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge (22 Dec. 2003):

"If we go to [code] Red ... it basically shuts down the country."

In which case, a national emergency is declared, Northern Command deploys its forces on air, land and sea. Several functions of civilian government are transferred to NORTHCOM headquarters, which already has the structures which enable it to oversee and supervise civilian institutions.

Code red alert would suspend civil liberties, including public gathering and/ or citizens' protests against the Administration's decision to declare martial law.

The emergency authorities would also have the authority to exert tight censorship over the media and would no doubt paralyze the alternative news media on the internet.

In turn, code red alert would trigger the "civilian" Homeland Emergency response system, including the DHS' Ready.Gov instructions, the Big Brother Citizen Corps, not to mention the USAonWatch and Neighborhood Watch Program which have a mandate to "identify and report suspicious activity in neighborhoods" across America.

The Militarization of Civilian Institutions

NSPD 51 is, in principle, a civilian directive emanating from the Presidency and the DHS.

What would be the involvement of the Military in a martial law situation, following the activation of NSPD 51?

In theory, the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 adopted in the wake of the US civil war, prevents the military from intervening in civilian police and judicial functions. This law has been central to the functioning of constitutional government.

Although the Posse Comitatus Act is still on the books, in practice the legislation is no longer effective in preventing the militarization of civilian institutions. (See Frank Morales, Global

Research, September 2003)

Legislation inherited from the Clinton administration, not to mention the post 9/11 Patriot Acts I and II, "blurs the line between military and civilian roles", it allows the military to intervene in judicial and law enforcement activities even in the absence of an emergency situation.

In 1996, legislation was passed which allowed the military to intervene in the case of a national emergency (e.g.. a terrorist attack). In 1999, Clinton's Defense Authorization Act (DAA) extended those powers (under the 1996 legislation) by creating an "exception" to the Posse Comitatus Act, which would allow the military to be involved in civilian affairs "regardless of whether there is an emergency". (See ACLU)

Under this 1999 provision, "the mere threat of an act of terrorism would justify calling in military units. That represents a loophole large enough to drive a battalion of army tanks through." (Ibid)

In other words, the Clinton era legislation had already laid the legal and ideological foundations of the "global war on terrorism".

While NSPD 51 is a significant and timely landmark, it is broadly consistent with the pre-existing legislation, with one important exception. NSPD 51 confirms that "Continuity in Government" (COG), while suspending the Constitution, would be carried out under the control of the Presidency.

This distinction is important, in view of mounting opposition within the Armed Forces to the possible use of a "false flag" terrorist attack as a justification for the launching of a broader Middle East war, in which nuclear weapons could be used against Iran.

NSPD 51 largely confirms the "legitimacy" of preexisting procedures and legislation, while also stipulating a central and critical role for the presidency in the case of a "Catastrophic Emergency". In fact, NSPD 51 thwarts the possibility of discretionary actions taken unilaterally by the Military in the case of a national emergency. Broadly speaking, NSPD 51 reinforces the control exerted by the White House, its civilian apparatus as well as its corporate lobby groups.

While COG would result in the militarization of civilian institutions, this process would be under the control of civilian policy-makers, acting on behalf of their corporate sponsors. This civilian policy apparatus, made up of senior NeoCon advisers, with links to the Washington think tanks, Wall Street and the oil giants, is slated to play a key role in the case of martial law.

Whereas the militarization of justice and law enforcement would proceed, the Military would, nonetheless, remain subordinate to a "civilian dictatorship".

War Games and the Militarization of National Emergency Preparedness

Another relevant dimension of the militarization of civilian institutions pertains to interagency collaboration between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Pentagon in the conduct of military style "catastrophic emergency response" exercises .

This "interagency collaboration" was endorsed in 2006 by the US Congress. FEMA (under the jurisdiction of the Department Homeland Security) was given exceptional powers. A significant budget was also provided to finance an ongoing partnership between FEMA and the US Military.

Northern Command was responsible for establishing links with civilian agencies involved in

emergency preparedness (operating under the Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)).

What has unfolded is an integrated military/civilian outlook on emergency preparedness. A number of civilian agencies now actively participate in the conduct of Pentagon war games. In 2006, FEMA's "catastrophic disaster response" exercise was integrated into the conduct of US Northern Command's "Operation Vigilant Shield 07":

"[In a] joint exercise activity, FEMA and USNORTHCOM exercised catastrophic disaster response during Vigilant Shield 07, an exercise focusing on a nuclear weapons accident and a terrorist event. (David Paulison, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management, Agency (FEMA), statement to the Committee on House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management, US Congress, 19 May 2007)

Vigilant Shield 07 was a far-reaching "New Cold War" type war games exercise, directed against directed against (Irmingham) Iran and its Cold war era enemies: Ruebek (Russia), Churya (China), and Nemazee (North Korea). (for further details, see Michel Chossudovsky, Theater Iran Near Term, Global Research, February 21, 2007)

In April-May 2007, FEMA together with a number of civilian agencies including the FBI, local and State and private organizations participated in the Pentagon's Ardent Sentry-Northern Edge 07 war games (AS-NE 07), under the helm of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. U.S.

Part of the AS NE 07 war games were directed against Russia. They were held in the vicinity of the Bearing Straits on the immediate borders with Russia's Fareast, These associated exercises in Alaska entitled Alaska Shield also included the participation of Canadian forces. (For further details, see NorthCom.mil Fact Sheet)

Continued Emergency Preparedness

In the months prior as well as following the release of NSPD-51 by the White House on 9 May 2007, emergency exercises have been held, with the support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in several US cities. How to respond in the case of a "Catastrophic Event". Brainstorming sessions involving officials from local, state and federal agencies have met to examine what to do in the case of "Catastrophic Event" or terrorist attack.

On June 2nd, the US was "dominated by screaming headlines and sensationalist broadcast coverage of an alleged plot in New York to blow up John F. Kennedy International Airport" (See Bill van Auken, June 7, 2007). In the meantime, the US public has become increasingly skeptical of repeated fake terror alerts:

There is every reason to believe that the succession of "terror" cases, each one weaker than the last and virtually all of them driven by "informants" who seem to play more the role of agents provocateur, are aimed at achieving precisely this effect. They serve as a means of intimidating public opinion with fear, justifying attacks on democratic rights and diverting attention from the ongoing debacle in Iraq.

The problem faced by the government is that the public is growing increasingly skeptical

about these cases, with a sizeable portion of the population having concluded that they are trumped up for political purposes. (Ibid)

New Military Appointments; The Firing of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Several key military appointments were made in recent months. Of significance, Admiral. William J. Fallon, was appointed Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in March by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates.

Meanwhile, another major military appointment was implemented, which has a direct bearing on war preparations in relation to Iran. Admiral Timothy J. Keating Commander of US NORTHCOM was appointed on March 26, to head US Pacific Command, which includes both the 5th and the 7th fleets. The 7th Fleet Pacific Command is the largest U.S. combatant command. Keating, who takes over from Admiral Fallon is also an unbending supporter of the "war on terrorism". Pacific Command would be playing a key role in the context of a military operation directed against Iran. (<http://www.pacom.mil/about/pacom.shtml>)

Of significance, Admiral Keating was also involved in the 2003 attack on Iraq as commander of US Naval Forces Central Command and the Fifth Fleet.

Admiral Fallon is fully compliant with the Bush administration's war plans in relation to Iran. He replaces Gen. John P. Abizaid, who was pushed into retirement, following apparent disagreements with Rumsfeld's successor, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates. While Abizaid recognized both the failures and the weaknesses of the US military in Iraq, Admiral Fallon is closely aligned with Vice President Dick Cheney. He is also firmly committed to the "Global War on Terrorism" (GWOT). CENTCOM would coordinate an attack on Iran from the Middle East war theater.

Moreover, the appointment of an Admiral is indicative of a shift in emphasis of CENTCOM's functions in the war theater. The "near term" emphasis is Iran rather than Iraq, requiring the coordination of naval and air force operations in the Persian Gulf.

The instatement of NSPD 51 in May 2007 was followed barely a few weeks later by the announcement of the "non-renewal of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General Peter Pace, who in recent months, has indicated his disagreement with the Administration regarding Iran.

General Pace stated (February 2007) that he saw no firm evidence of Tehran supplying weapons to Shiite militias inside Iraq, which was being heralded by the Bush administration as a justification for waging war on Iran:

"[M]aybe that's why he's the outgoing chairman. Maybe that's why they're not renewing him. Because ...He has seen no evidence that Iran is fomenting unrest in Iraq that's causing Americans lives... " (Fox News' Alan Colmes, ox News, June, 13, 2007),

General Peter Pace ends his term as Chairman of the JCS in September 2007. Defense Secretary Gates has already announced that Admiral Michael Mullen, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, has been nominated to replace General Peter Pace as Chairman of the Joint chiefs of Staff.

Admiral Mullen's discourse is in marked contrast to that of General Peter Pace. Mullen, who was in

charge of coordinating naval war games off the Iranian coastline, has expressed an unbending commitment to "waging" and "winning asymmetric wars", while also "protecting the United States":

"we must ensure we have the Battle Force, the people, and the combat readiness we need to win our nation's wars...

Our Navy is fighting the Global War on Terror while at the same time providing a Strategic Reserve worldwide for the President and our Unified and Combatant Commanders.... Simply reacting to change is no longer an acceptable course of action if our Navy is to successfully wage asymmetric warfare and simultaneously deter regional and transnational threats (Statement, Senate Armed Services Committee, 7 May 2007)

Admiral Mullen's stance is in line with that of the Bush Administration's key Neo-conservative ideologues. With regard to Iran, echoing almost verbatim the stance of the White House, Admiral Mullen considers that it is "unacceptable that Iran is providing U.S. enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan with capabilities that are hurting and killing U.S. troops." (Inside the Pentagon, June 21, 2007). But on the issue of Iran, the Democrats are on board. There is a bipartisan consensus, expressed by Senator Jo Lieberman:

"I want to make clear I'm not talking about a massive ground invasion of Iran,... [but a] strike over the border into Iran, where we have good evidence that they have a base at which they are training these people coming back into Iraq to kill our soldiers" (AP, June 11, 2007)

US Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East War Theater

The use of conventional and nuclear weapons are now part of the same integrated command structure.

The Bush administration has confirmed that it contemplates the possible use tactical bunker buster nuclear bombs to "take out" Iran's non-existent nuclear weapons' facilities. An operational plan to wage aerial attacks on Iran has been in "a state of readiness" since June 2005. Essential military hardware to wage this operation has been deployed. (For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, Nuclear War against Iran, Jan 2006).

Vice President Dick Cheney' "Contingency Plan" "includes a large-scale air assault on Iran employing both conventional and tactical nuclear weapons." (Philip Giraldi, Attack on Iran: Pre-emptive Nuclear War , The American Conservative, 2 August 2005). USSTRATCOM would have the responsibility for overseeing and coordinating this military deployment as well as launching the military operation. (For details, Michel Chossudovsky, Nuclear War against Iran, Jan 2006).

The Bush administration has the full support of its NATO allies and Israel.

US made B61 tactical nuclear weapons have also been deployed in five European non-nuclear states, members of NATO, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Turkey. The B61 tactical nuclear warheads under the jurisdiction of these five non-nuclear states, plus Britain are pointed at Iran.

While Iran, which possesses a bona fide nuclear energy program, is the object of potential military retaliation, these five European non-nuclear countries (not to mention Israel), are not considered by the "international community" as a threat to global security, in a clear expression of double standards.

General Peter Pace is known to be opposed to the use of nuclear weapons against Iran:

"The Bush regime's plan to attack Iran with nuclear weapons puts General Pace's departure in a different light. How can President Bush succeed with an order to attack with nuclear weapons when America's highest ranking military officer says that such an order is "illegal and immoral" and that everyone in the military has an "absolute responsibility" to disobey it?" (Paul Craig Roberts, Global Research, June 2007)

It would be difficult to wage war on Iran without the firm endorsement of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to Paul Craig Roberts, "[General] Pace had to go so that malleable toadies [Admiral Mullen] can be installed in his place [as Chairman of the JCS]"

Pace's departure removes a known obstacle to a nuclear attack on Iran, thus advancing that possible course of action. A plan to attack Iran with nuclear weapons might also explain the otherwise inexplicable "National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive" (NSPD-51 and HSPD-20) that Bush issued on May 9. ...

The use of nuclear weapons arouses the ultimate fear. A US nuclear attack would send Russian and Chinese ICBMs into high alert. False flag operations could be staged in the US. The propagandistic US media would hype such developments to the hilt, portraying danger everywhere. Fear of the [Bush] regime's new detention centers would silence most voices of protest as the regime declares its "national emergency." (Ibid)

Concluding Remarks

9/11 and the threat of a second major attack on America are ostensibly part of the building block of the US National Security doctrine. While, the threat of an impending 9/11 type attack by "Islamic terrorists" is a fabrication, extensive media propaganda, supported by covert intelligence operations, has ensured that the "Global War on Terrorism" or GWOT is widely accepted both by the supporters and opponents of the Bush administration.

Visibly based on an outright lie, GWOT has nonetheless gained in legitimacy among America's European partners and allies, which have adopted their own ("copy and paste") anti-terrorist emergency procedures.

Despite mountains of evidence, the 9/11 attacks continue to be upheld by the US and its NATO allies as a bona fide act of war by a foreign power. Since 911, the GWOT is supported by the governments of more than 90 countries. (President George W. Bush, CENTCOM Coalition Conference, May 1, 2007)

Ironically, the Global War on Terrorism is also endorsed by several prominent and authoritative "progressive" intellectuals, who condemn US foreign policy and the Middle East war, while upholding the legitimacy of America's campaign against "Islamic terrorism."

An important segment of the US antiwar movement has a similar stance. While calling for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, it denies the existence of a national resistance movement to the US led occupation: "We are against the US led war in Iraq, but we support the war on terrorism." Not surprisingly, Bush's "Catastrophic Emergency" Directive (NSPD 51) does not seem to have raised much concern within the US Antiwar movement.

Since 9/11, numerous lead stories and Op Eds outlining the nature of the "Global War on Terrorism" have been fed profusely into the news chain. A worldwide Al Qaeda legend has emerged.

Repeated ad nauseam on a daily basis, the GWOT has also become part of a shaky bipartisan political consensus. Despite the blatant contradictions and the political lies, in particular in relation to 9/11 and the possibility of a second terrorist attack, the GWOT is nonetheless accepted by an increasingly skeptical US public opinion.

Behind this diabolical "catastrophic emergency" scenario, which ultimately hinges on the powers of media disinformation and deceit, is a profit driven war.

The spiraling multibillion dollar "defense" budget, which according to independent estimates has reached the trillion dollar mark, is barely acknowledged, nor is the privatization of war itself.

The US military industrial complex which produces the numerous "humanitarian weapons" including the mini-nukes and bunker buster bombs used to go after the terrorists, would be the direct beneficiary of a war on Iran, together Wall Street and the Anglo-American oil giants, which vie to appropriate and privatize the region's extensive oil and gas reserves.

This war is not led by the military but by the civilian corporate interests which lie behind the Bush administration. The military takes orders from civilians acting on behalf of those dominant economic interests.

The Wall Street financial establishment, the military-industrial complex, led by Lockheed Martin, the big five weapons and aerospace defense contractors, the Texas oil giants and energy conglomerates, the construction and engineering and public utility companies not to mention the biotechnology conglomerates, are indelibly behind this militarization of America.

In turn, the Worldwide demonization of Islam is part of this profit driven war. Three quarters of the World's oil reserves lie in Muslim lands. (World Oil 2004, see also Michel Chossudovsky, The Demonization of Muslims and the Battle for Oil, Global Research, January 2007).

Vilification of the enemies of America, portrayed as fanatic Islamic terrorists, is part of the Battle for Oil. If the oil were in countries occupied predominantly by Buddhists or Hindus, one would expect that Bush's entire National Security agenda, including the recent "Catastrophic Emergency" Directive NSP 51 would be directed against Buddhists and Hindus.

How to reverse the tide?

The threat of a Second Al Qaeda "Attack on America" is being used profusely by the Bush administration to galvanize public opinion in support of a global military agenda.

Known and documented, the "Islamic terror network" is a creation of the US intelligence apparatus. The "war on terrorism" is bogus. The 911 narrative as conveyed by the 911 Commission report is fabricated.

The Bush administration is involved in acts of cover-up and complicity at the highest levels of government.

Revealing the lies behind 911 would serve to undermine the legitimacy of the "global war on terrorism" which constitutes the main justification for waging war in the Middle East.

Without 911, the war criminals in high office do not have a leg to stand on. Their entire National Security construct collapses like a deck of cards.

© 2007 Michel Chossudovsky

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=6134>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-552.html>