

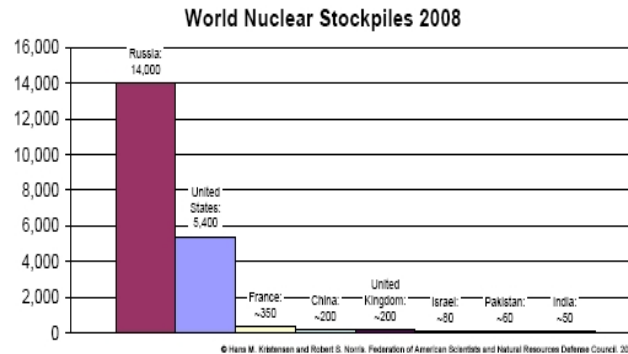
to open impeachment proceedings if Bush attacked Iran. The letter is a signal that planning for strikes on Iran is under way and pronounced.

“Our concerns in this area have been heightened by more recent events,” Conyers wrote. “The resignation in mid-March of Admiral William J. ‘Fox’ Fallon from the head of U.S. Central Command, which was reportedly linked to a magazine article that portrayed him as the only person who might stop your Administration from waging preemptive war against Iran, has renewed widespread concerns that your Administration is unilaterally planning for military action against that country. This is despite the fact that the December 2007 National Intelligence Estimate concluded that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in the fall of 2003, a stark reversal of previous Administration assessments.”

The administration, in rhetoric that is eerily similar to that used to build the case for a war against Iraq, asserts that the Iranian Quds Force is arming anti-American groups in Iraq and providing them with high-tech roadside bombs and sophisticated rockets. It dismisses the National Intelligence Estimate conclusion that Iran suspended its nuclear weapons program. The White House has not provided evidence to back up its claims. I suspect it never will. And when Israel’s Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz tells the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth an attack on Iran is “unavoidable” if Tehran does not halt its alleged nuclear weapons program, **what he is really telling us is we should prepare for war.**

Conyers’ threat is too little too late, especially if the Bush White House, possibly assisted by Israel, launches airstrikes on some or all of 1,000 selected Iranian targets in the final weeks of the administration. But it is an effort. Conyers tried.

This is more than we can say for the presumptive Democratic nominee. Obama went before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) on Wednesday and said he will stand with the right-wing Israeli government, even if this means backing an attack on Iran.



The US has 5000 additional warheads in reserve

“As president I will use all elements of American power to pressure Iran,” he said. “I will do everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Everything.”

Obama went on to blame the Palestinians for the conflict, although the ratio of Palestinians to Israelis killed in 2007 was 40 to 1. This is an increase from 30 to 1 in 2006 and 4 to 1 in 2000-2005.

“I will bring to the White House an unshakable commitment to Israel’s security. That starts with ensuring Israel’s qualitative military advantage, ...” Obama told AIPAC. “I will ensure Israel can defend itself from any threat, from Gaza to Tehran. ...”

Obama spoke about Israelis whose houses were damaged by the crude rockets, most made out of old pipes, fired from Gaza on Israeli towns. He

never mentioned the Israeli siege of Gaza, the world’s largest open-air prison, or that Israel was deploying fighter jets and helicopters to attack densely crowded refugee camps with missiles and iron fragmentation bombs or that it had cut off food and fuel. He ignored the steady expansion of Jewish settlements on Palestinian land. He called for Jerusalem to become the “undivided capital” of the Jewish state, erasing Arab East Jerusalem from the map in contravention of international law. East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are internationally recognized as occupied Palestinian territories, which Israel took over in 1967.

Obama’s stance is the moral equivalent of assuring the Johannesburg government during the apartheid era that one would support their repressive efforts to punish the restive blacks in the townships.

The deterioration of the conflict in Israel, which would be accelerated by airstrikes on Iran and an ensuing regional war, will propel us into the Armageddon-type scenario in the Middle East relished by the lunatic fringes of the radical Christian right. And so, with Obama’s enthusiastic endorsement, we barrel toward a Dr. Strangelove self-immolation. No one will be able to say we did not go out with a spectacular show of firepower, gore and death. Our European and Middle Eastern allies, who are numb with consternation over our death spiral, are frantically trying to reach out to Tehran diplomatically.

The instant we attack Iran, oil prices will double, perhaps triple. This price increase will devastate the American economy. The ensuing retaliatory strikes by Iran on Israel, as well as on American military installations in Iraq, will leave hundreds, maybe thousands, of dead. The Shiites in the region, from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, will see an attack on Iran as a war against Shiism. They will turn with rage and violence on us and our allies. Hezbollah will renew attacks on northern Israel.

And the localized war in Iraq will become a long, messy and protracted regional war that, by the time it is done, will most likely end the American empire and leave in its wake mounds of corpses and smoldering ruins.

The Israeli leadership, like the Bush White House, is increasingly bellicose and threatening. The Israeli prime minister, after a 90-minute meeting with Bush in the White House on Wednesday, said the two leaders were of one mind. "We reached agreement on the need to take care of the Iranian threat," Ehud Olmert said. "I left with a lot less questions marks [than] I had entered with regarding the means, the timetable restrictions and American resoluteness to deal with the problem. George Bush understands the severity of the Iranian threat and the need to vanquish it and intends to act on the matter before the end of his term in the White House."

This time around, unlike about the war with Iraq, the Washington bureaucracy, loathed by the Bush White House, did not remain silent and complicit. The National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear program released last Dec. 3 distinguished Iran's enrichment of uranium at Natanz and Arak from its formal nuclear weapons program, which it said had halted in 2003 after the American invasion of Iraq. Adm. Fallon, who put his country and his integrity before his career, spoke out against a war with Iran, tried to stop it and lost his job as the head of CENTCOM. He has been replaced with Gen. David H. Petraeus, whose devotion to his career admits no such moral impediments.

"... There is no greater threat to Israel or peace than Iran," Obama assured AIPAC. "This audience is made up of both Republicans and Democrats. And the enemies of Israel should have no doubt that regardless of party, Americans stand shoulder to shoulder in support of Israel's security. ... The

Iran regime supports violent extremists and challenges us across the region. It pursues a nuclear capability that could spark a dangerous arms race and ... its president denies the Holocaust and **[in an often used misrepresentation of Iran's intentions claimed that Iran]** hreatens to wipe Israel off the map. ... [M]y goal will be to eliminate this threat."

Barack Obama, when we need sane leadership the most, has proved feckless and weak. He, and the Democratic leadership, is as morally bankrupt as those preparing to ignite our funeral pyre in the Middle East.

ACTION

Contact Senator Obama and say, "No War for Israel. We need sane leadership." Call (202) 224-3121 and ask the Capitol Switchboard operator to connect you to Obama's office.

Local contact:

8th Day Center for Justice

*A Catholic faith-based NGO
for Social Change*



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The Iran Trap

Chris Hedges Jun 8, 2008, Truthdig

The failure by Barack Obama to chart another course in the Middle East, to defy the Israel lobby and to denounce the Bush administration's inexorable march toward a conflict with Iran is a failure to challenge the collective insanity that has gripped the political leadership in the United States and Israel.



Obama, in a miscalculation that will have grave consequences, has given his blessing to the widening circle of violence and abuse of the Palestinians by Israel and, most dangerously, to those in the Bush White House and Jerusalem now plotting a war against Iran. He illustrates how the lust for power is morally corrosive. And while he may win the White House, by the time he takes power he will be trapped in George Bush's alternative reality.

We need to get out of Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to stay the hand of Israel, which is building more settlements—including a new plan to put 800 housing units in occupied East Jerusalem—and imposing draconian measures to physically break the 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza. We need, most of all, to prevent a war with Iran.

House Judiciary Chairman John Conyers, in a letter to President Bush on May 8, threatened