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Shock And Awe; The sequel

By Mike Whitney

03/08/06 "ICH" -- -- The Bush administration has unilaterally repealed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) by demanding that Iran cease all uranium enrichment. This action overturns the central principle of the treaty which provides states with the “inalienable right” (NPT phrase) to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. Two years of intrusive inspections by the UN watchdog agency (IAEA) have not produced “any evidence of nuclear weapons programs” or any diversion of nuclear material. Nevertheless, the US insists that Iran be deprived of the same right that is afforded to every other signatory of the NPT.

What gives Washington the right to rescind an internationally-recognized treaty?

White House press secretary Scott McClellan summarized the administration’s view saying, “We’ve made it clear as have many in the international community that the regime must suspend all enrichment activity. It cannot be allowed to pursue enrichment in any capacity on any scale that would allow the regime to develop technologies needed to develop nuclear weapons.”

McClellan’s comments are a clear violation of the letter and spirit of the treaty which is not intended to arbitrarily deprive any member of the advantages of nuclear technology. The administration’s brazen declaration puts the onus on the 35-member board of the IAEA to reject their demands. Unfortunately, most of them are already cowed by the bullying tactics of the US.

This tells us that the system is broken and cannot be expected to provide solutions to this or any of the other pressing issues that face the world community. The “superpower model” of governance allows one party to quash agreements on global warming, nuclear proliferation, chemical-biological weapons and anything else that isn’t in its narrow, subjective interests.

Will the member states cave in on these species-threatening issues too, simply to please Washington?

The Iran Daily; 3-7-06

A last minute compromise by Iran's foreign-minister left IAEA-chief Muhammad ElBaradei believing that a negotiated settlement to the nuclear standoff was possible.

"I am still very much hopeful that in the next week or so an agreement can be reached," said ElBaradei.

The Bush administration crushed all hope of a settlement immediately.

The US State Department dismissed Iran's concessions and pushed for a quick referral to the UN Security Council.

Why?

What's the hurry? Is the administration looking for solutions or are Pentagon-planners operating on a tight timeline?

Iran's last minute compromise put Condi Rice into a frenzy; firing off a panicky phone call to ElBaradei saying, "The United States cannot support this."

Support what? Negotiation? Deliberation? Peace?

ElBaradei had merely suggested that "the standoff with Iran could be resolved in a week or so". (NY Times) He was optimistic that a deal with Russia to enrich uranium outside of Iran would allay American fears of a hidden nuclear weapons program.

Is that what made Condi so anxious?

The US reaction is instructive in many ways, and seems to indicate that Bush and Co. may have scheduled hostilities for later this month.

Certainly, the propaganda-campaign is already in full-swing with Condi, McClellan, Rumsfeld, Bolton, and Cheney all blasting-away at Iran in the last 48 hours.

The media smokescreen has obscured Iran's attempts at "confidence-building" by agreeing to forgo all "industrial scale" enrichment for two years even though it is allowed under the terms of the NPT.

The strategy now is to divert attention from Iran's 'generous offer' and ratchet up the demagoguery to full-throttle.

In the meantime, the State Dept has been busy moving the goalposts to ensure that Iran will reject its final offer.

Right after ElBaradei expressed optimism about finding a solution, Undersecretary of State, Nicholas Burns, pulled the rug out from under him saying, “The United States will not support any halfway measures. That means full suspension of all nuclear activities, and a return to negotiations on that basis.”

“Full suspension”? What right does the US have to ask for full suspension?

This was the first time that US officials admitted they were repealing the NPT and brushing aside the counsel of the IAEA. Burns remarks confirm that the administration is bent on torpedoing the process.

But how will Burns and Condi derail ElBaradei’s efforts for peace?

Well, for starters, the State Dept will have to make outrageous, unilateral demands that are so extreme that Iran will never agree to them. That way, the media can say that Iran is “defying the international community” and forcing a referral to the Security Council.

The administration will insist that Iran agree to a moratorium on the production of enriched uranium, comply with additional “unspecified” protocols, and allow for “transparency measures” to accommodate future inspections.

Sound familiar?”

These are the same conditions that were placed on Saddam. Iran knows that the US will use these “transparency measures” to ferret through every inch of the country; rummaging through armories, military bases, palaces, barracks, private residences; anywhere that might annoy, provoke, humiliate or harass the current regime.

Then, after months of microscopically-combing through every inch of Iranian sovereign territory, the flummoxed administration will invent some shaky pretext for invasion.

True or false?

Yesterday’s ham-fisted maneuverings reveal the administration’s true objectives. Bush would like to conceal his attack on Iran behind a mask of international legitimacy. But even without Security Council approval the plan will move forward. The current showdown has nothing to do with “noncompliance” or imaginary nuclear weapons programs. It has everything to do with consolidating the vast resources of the Caspian Basin under the Stars and Stripes and fending off future threats to America’s global domination.

Look for Shock-and-Awe “the sequel” sometime in late March.

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