

Why the US is targetting Russia & Iran

Energy resources, Trident and the drive for
Nuclear Primacy



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Foreword By Bruce Kent



A pamphlet from the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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Foreword by Bruce Kent

Alan Mackinnon's new pamphlet provides a convincing, detailed and alarming picture of the direction in which the world is moving.

He draws together evidence from United States economic policy, energy ambitions, military power and national hubris to show that a very dangerous plan is, at the instigation of the extreme Right, in process of being implemented.

'But they wouldn't be mad enough to risk a global nuclear war' will be one response. That is just what I foolishly thought about the bombings of Afghanistan and Kosovo and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

One consolation. None of Alan's predictions have to happen if enough people come to see where we are being led and plan for a different and peaceful global future.

Bruce Kent

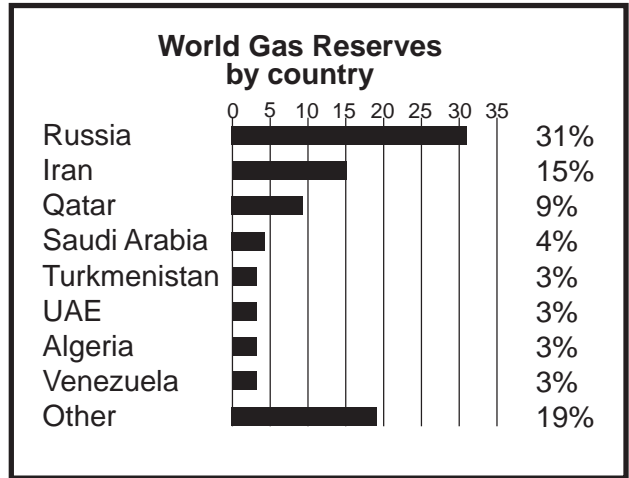


WHY THE US IS TARGETTING RUSSIA AND IRAN

Russia is fast emerging as the world's new energy giant. In July 2007 it overtook Saudi Arabia as the world's biggest producer of oil. But the real measure of its geo-strategic significance is its huge reserves of natural gas, by far the biggest in the world. And what worries the West is that President Putin, from a low point where Yeltsin had sold off its oil and gas assets to the oligarchs, has steadily and single mindedly reasserted state control and ownership of Russia's oil and gas reserves and pipelines, not only from those who stole them in the 90s, but from the unequal Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs) with the US and UK oil companies who followed in their wake. Today Russia's oil pipelines and exports are firmly in the hands of Sibneft and its gas sales and pipelines exclusively handled by Gazprom, both nationally owned. Russia now supplies 30% of the

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natural gas to Western Europe and through a new network of gas and oil pipelines from Siberia and Sakhalin Island on Russia's far eastern seaboard is set to supply an increasing amount of energy to China (and perhaps also Japan and South Korea). If you add to that the new oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan through Kazakhstan to China, the gas pipeline from the offshore Myanmar fields in the Bay of Bengal to Kunming in Yunnan province and the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, you can see the pattern of a new Asian Energy Security Grid taking shape.



These are not just energy deals. They bind the oil and gas producing nations of Iran, Russia and the eastern Caspian into a new relationship of mutual dependency with the huge and growing economies of China and India, giving them a stake in the political and economic stability of one another and increasing regional cooperation and integration. Clearly the growing economic, energy and military relationship between Russia and China stands at its core. Its political dimension has been formalised in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO) comprising Russia, China and the states of central asia. Iran, along with India, Pakistan and Mongolia, is now an observer to the SCO, and has openly declared its wish to become a fully fledged member.

This is America's biggest nightmare. It has the makings of a rival economic, political and military bloc comprising almost half the



world's population and cornering up to half the world's oil and gas. It threatens US control over the arterial network of oil. It simply bypasses US naval supremacy by the increasing use of land-based pipelines across 'Eurasia' - the world's biggest and most populous continent. And it will rapidly accelerate the growing trend to denominate oil sales in currencies other than the dollar, threatening the dollar as the world's reserve currency. And this, in turn, will threaten the entire American way of life, predicated on a huge credit bubble and a mountain of petrodollars held by the world's central banks. Above all it will threaten the huge US arms budget, sustained by deficit budgetting, which defends America's global empire.

Nuclear Primacy

How will corporate America respond to this challenge? It will use the one area of superiority it still possesses over all its rivals - its huge war machine and its virtual monopoly over advanced military technology. The neo-conservatives around Dick Cheney have always been aware of the dangers of an economically resurgent Russia with its huge land mass straddling Europe, the Middle East and Asia and its rich energy reserves. Their strategy has been to encircle, isolate and deconstruct Russia with the main prize its huge oil and gas assets. The influential former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski (certainly not a neo-con) in an article entitled 'A Geostrategy for Eurasia' called for a post-soviet Russia to be decentralised, based on free-market economics and loosely confederated into a European Russia, a Siberian Republic and a Far Eastern Republic. Thus the US 'Committee to expand NATO' (a committee packed with prominent neo-cons) from the earliest days of the Bush administration set about recruiting new NATO members from eastern and southern Europe in the aftermath of the Cold War. By 2004 Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia had all been admitted to NATO with Georgia and the Ukraine being considered for the future. In 2003 many of the same individuals opened a new powerful lobbying organisation called the 'Project on Transitional Democracies'



designed to encourage and help fund regime change in the former Soviet republics along the southern flank of Russia - the so-called 'colour' revolutions of Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. And that strategy of encirclement has now taken a new more ominous twist. The intention to deploy missile defence interceptors in Poland and associated radar in the Czech Republic along with the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons can only be interpreted as part of an aggressive first strike strategy and a move to establish Nuclear Primacy.

A first strike strategy is, of course, not new. What is new is that Missile Defence plus an accurate new warhead could give the United States the ability to strike first without fear of effective retaliation. Gone are the days of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) or joint vulnerability. In its place one side has established such overwhelming dominance that it could launch a nuclear attack and survive unscathed. And this nuclear primacy is unmistakably directed against Russia, the only country with the military technology and infrastruc-

Expansion of NATO

1949	1952	1955	1982	1999	2004	?2010
Holland Luxembourg France UK Belgium United States Canada Portugal Italy Norway Denmark Iceland	Greece Turkey	W. Germany	Spain	Hungary Czech Rep Poland	Estonia Latvia Lithuania Slovenia Slovakia Bulgaria Romania	Albania Croatia Macedonia Georgia Montenegro Ukraine

Source: Wikipedia.org/wiki.NATO



Asian Energy Security Grid

New gas pipelines proposed or under construction (September 2007)



ture to be any kind of potential military rival in the foreseeable future.

Of course the Bush administration will not say so openly. Iran, they claim, is the main aim of the missile defence posture, but nobody, certainly not Vladimir Putin, believes that and a cursory examination of the facts reveals this to be less than credible. Iran, according to IAEA chief Mohammed El Baredai, has no nuclear weapons programme. And even if it did, according to most nuclear experts it would still be 5-10 years from acquiring a single atom bomb. It simply does not make economic or strategic sense that the United States, with its overwhelming military dominance would invest hundreds of billions of dollars in missile defence and the weaponisation of space to counter the remote threat of a relative minnow like Iran. Iran is the scapegoat. Russia is the real target.

Iran - the weak link

But Iran is not just a scapegoat for an ultimate move on Russia. It is a US target in its own right. It stands at the centre of US ambitions in the Middle East. With its growing influence to the west and the east, Iran is the crucial link in the formation of a new Asian energy security grid. It is also, as the Americans see it, the weakest link in this network. The coming war with Iran could be, in effect, the first resource war against Eurasia.

Firstly let us be clear what this is not about. It is not about the risks of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and threatening to use them against America or any other country. Nuclear weapons are specifically outlawed in Iran by a *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Komeini in the 1980s that the production, possession and use of nuclear weapons was against Islam. Iran has co-operated with the IAEA inspections programme, and initially agreed to the Additional Protocol insisted on by the United States and the EU-3 (Britain, Germany and France) which involved snap inspections and broader searching powers. Since October 2005, however, it has suspended its co-operation with the Additional Protocol until the IAEA recognises its

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Mohammed El Baradei

rights to 'complete the nuclear fuel cycle'. With the prospect of future US military action, Iran is understandably reluctant to part with all its secrets. It has, therefore, provided information only when directly asked and only to the extent that the inquiry demanded. This has been interpreted as a 'lack of transparency'.

Under pressure from the United States (including a threat not to support him for a 3rd term of office in 2005), Mohammed El Baradei escalated his demands on the Iranian government. It seemed that Iran was not to be allowed

to keep any military secrets at all. If the Iranian government is wary of allowing non-nuclear military sites to be inspected, a level of intrusion not visited upon any other NPT signatory, then who can blame them. There is documented evidence that inspection teams in Iraq in 2002 included US secret service agents who passed on information to the US and Israeli forces in preparation for the eventual military attack on that country a year later.

Despite the most extensive inspections programme imposed on any country, however, there is no evidence that Iran is enriching uranium beyond the level needed for nuclear power generation or diverting nuclear material away from its civil programme. And the American and British governments know this. Ratcheting up the



pressure through the IAEA and imposing sanctions through the UN security council is a smokescreen.

Growing influence

Iran's real crime is that it has the second largest combined oil and gas reserves in the world and it refuses to bow the knee to the United States. Its growing influence on its western frontiers is more to do with America's support for corrupt and hated regimes in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel and its ill-fated wars on Iraq and Afghanistan, than it has to do with any active Iranian intervention. It was Bush, after all, who toppled the Sunni dominated Bathist regime in Iraq opening the way to a shia dominated government and large parts of the country under the control of shi'ite militias. It was the Israeli assault on Lebanon in August 2006 and the resistance of the Shi'ite Hezbollah which hugely enhanced the influence of that

Route of proposed Iran-Pakistan-India Natural Gas Pipeline



organisation in the region. It was Israeli and US policy in Palestine and the perceived failure and corruption of Fatah which led to the election of Iranian-supported Hamas in the Gaza strip. And it was an accident of fate which decreed that most of the Middle East oil deposits are in Shia areas open to Iranian influence - Iran, southern Iraq and eastern Saudi Arabia.

On its eastern flank it is once again circumstances largely outside Iranian control which have dictated Iran's new geo-strategic importance. The rapidly emerging economies of China and India and their growing energy needs in a world with finite and depleting oil reserves have been the forcing house for a new alliance of oil exporting and importing nations in central and eastern Asia.

Chinese imports of Iranian crude oil have increased by 14% in the first 4 months of 2007. In addition the Sinopec Group, a major Chinese energy firm, has concluded a staggering \$70 billion deal for the joint development of the giant Yadavaran gas field and the delivery of 250 million tons of liquid natural gas to China over a 30 year period. India also is keen to secure supplies of oil and gas from Iran. The Gas Authority of India has signed a 30 year deal to transfer 7.5 million tons of liquid natural gas to India per year and to invest in the development of Iranian oil fields.

But the most significant development of all is the proposal for a \$3.6 billion natural gas pipeline to India via Pakistan. This was described by Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz as a 'win-win proposition' for all concerned. The deal would supply India and Pakistan with 70 million cubic metres of natural gas a year and earn Pakistan an estimated \$600 million in transit fees. Two thirds of the gas would go to India. And there is already talk of extending the pipeline to Yunan province in China. The pipeline would have the added benefit of binding two nuclear armed nations involved in a long running dispute over the sovereignty of Kashmir into a new economic partnership and mutual dependency.



Not surprisingly, the United States is desperate to stop the deal and has been wooing India assiduously for some years. Its own nuclear power deal with India (despite that country being a non-signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty) was intended to answer some of India's concerns over future energy needs, but Washington cannot supply oil and gas and Iran has these in abundance. Bush did manage to coerce India's vote against Iran at a crucial IAEA meeting in September 2005 (as well as the votes of weaker countries like Ghana, Sri Lanka and Yemen). But India, despite US pressure, has refused to renege on the pipeline deal. Delays in the construction of the pipeline, due to disagreements about price and transit



Ayatollah Khamenei accompanied by members of the Revolutionary Guard



fees, are expected to be settled in the near future. And in the meantime Gazprom has announced its willingness to support the new venture with financial resources and technology.

Taking out Iran

The United States is pursuing Iran on several fronts. Ramping up the pressure through ever more intrusive IAEA inspections is designed to wrongfoot the Mullahs in the hope that they will eventually refuse to cooperate leading to the

charge of 'non-compliance'. That country's 125,000 strong Revolutionary Guard could be labelled as a 'global terrorist' organisation. It is already being accused of orchestrating the growing military campaigns in southern Iraq, as well as armed resistance forces in Lebanon and Gaza. The logic of this position is that no progress can be made in ending the war in Iraq or solving the problem of Palestine without first taking out Iran. And if the UN refuses to impose crippling economic sanctions, then the United States would threaten unilateral military action.

At present the diplomatic campaign against Iran through the IAEA and the United Nations has cross party support from the US political establishment (including the leading Democrat presidential candidates) and 'old' and 'new' Europe alike. While Bush may have lost key allies in the form of Asnar in Spain and Berlusconi in Italy, he may have gained new ones in the recent elections in Germany and France. In particular Nicolas Sarkozy, the new French President, has made bellicose remarks about the need to use force against Iran. It remains to be seen, however, how many of them would support a



Leading Democrat presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has refused to rule out a military option against Iran



military strike against Iran. In Britain, Gordon Brown's position is uncertain because of the mixed messages he has been sending. But his past record on Iraq does not inspire confidence that he is willing to make a clear break with the Bush administration.

An attack on Iran would be opposed by the joint chiefs of staff, both houses of Congress and overwhelming US and world public opinion. And it is difficult to see what it would achieve. Iran is not Iraq. It is three times the size with three times the population and a difficult terrain. It would probably be the *coup de grace* for the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline. But it would not achieve regime change - quite the opposite as the population of Iran united behind their government in defence of their homeland. Iran has a very long coastline

along the north-eastern side of the Gulf and round the narrow Straits of Hormuz. Its sophisticated surface-to-air and surface-to-ship missiles could take a heavy toll of aircraft and shipping. It could almost certainly close the Gulf to all oil exports and, if it chose to, destroy the oil production infrastructure of neighbouring gulf states causing the oil price to soar. An exchange of fire with Israel could result in Israel or the US using their nuclear arsenal. And it could destabilise the fragile and despotic regimes in Saudi Arabia, Egypt or Pakistan which are the basis of US power in the region. But with **this** US president surrounded by **this** group of neo-conservatives who seem to learn no lessons from their past disasters, who would bet against it?



**US Missile Defence
interceptor**

US Military Dominance

Which brings us back to the drive for nuclear primacy. The US economy may face a growing threat from overseas competition, espe-



cially from the new tiger economies of China and India. But there has been no period in recent history when the United States has been in a more dominant position militarily. For any nation to attack the United States would mean certain suicide. It is utterly dominant in land, sea and air in virtually every part of the globe. Its 750-odd bases command every continent, its 5 active carrier fleets patrol the high seas and its mastery of the air has never been more emphatic.

Meanwhile, Russia's once powerful military machine is but a shadow of its former self. Both its conventional and nuclear forces are dilapidated, poorly maintained and in no fit state to detect or repel an attack. Its silo-based ICBMs are well past their 'sell-by' date and unreliable. Its nine nuclear armed submarines are sitting in port almost all the time and would make easy targets. Its early warning system is highly flawed and has a gaping hole on its eastern flank. China, for its part, is even more vulnerable to a pre-emptive strike. Its has no long range bombers. It now has no submarine based nuclear missiles. Its 18 land-based ICBMs are single warheaded and use obsolete liquid fuel. It would take hours to fuel them and load their warheads ready for firing. And most important of all, it has no effective early warning system.

While Russian and Chinese nuclear forces have deteriorated rapidly since the ending of the Cold War, the United States has steadily upgraded its forces with new more accurate Trident II D5 missiles, B52 bombers equipped with nuclear tipped cruise missiles and the new B2 stealth bomber, all of which increases its ability to evade Russia's early warning radar network.

First Strike Strategy

A benevolent United States which was interested in world peace and creating regional and global stability would take this unique opportunity to bring together all known nuclear states to negotiate a nuclear weapons convention. But instead Bush has chosen this moment to do the opposite. Nuclear laboratories on both sides of the Atlantic are feverishly working on a new highly accurate warhead for Trident. And



NUCLEAR WARHEADS

UNITED STATES

Land based	1,600
Sea based	3,168
Air launched	1,098
Total	5,866

RUSSIA

Land based	2,146
Sea based	1,392
Air launched	624
Total	4,162

Under the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in 2002, each side has to reduce its deployed warheads to a maximum of 2,200 by 2012.

Source: Memorandum of Understanding data 2007

the Pentagon is pushing ahead with plans for Missile Defence, now placing missile interceptors and advanced radar close to the borders of Russia. These interceptors would be unable to cope against a full-scale Russian missile strike. But that is not what they are designed for. They are there to mop up the few stray Russian missiles that would not be instantly destroyed in a devastating US first strike. It is that ability to strike first with impunity which the United States has been seeking since the early 1960s and which could now become a reality.

Does this matter? Does the United States really intend to launch a nuclear war which could

unleash a nuclear winter and wipe out human civilisation? Perhaps not. But it matters because it marks the beginning of a new arms race. Nuclear primacy is inherently unstable and will never last long. Already Putin has announced retaliatory measures. Russia and China may attempt to overcome their vulnerability by moving to a launch-on-warning status for their nuclear forces, raising the danger of nuclear war by accident. Either way it makes the planet a much more dangerous place.

It also matters because the United States is seeking Nuclear Primacy for a reason. Ultimately this huge war machine, including its nuclear component, is there to make the world safe for American business. Free trade, open economies, privatisation and deregulation have been the benchmarks of this policy up till now and have



been imposed on developed and developing countries alike through the World Bank, the IMF, the World Trade Organisation and regional blocs such as the EU and NAFTA. The success of China and India in out-globalising the globalisers and America's growing trade deficit may lead to the adoption of protectionist measures - globalism in reverse - as the US attempts to stem the flood of cheap exports from the east. China, in turn, could retaliate by dumping its huge reserves of dollars plunging the US economy into crisis.

But this overwhelming might could also be used to limit the growth of rival economies by limiting their access to key strategic resources such as oil and gas. Long before the United States became dependent on imported oil, it recognised the importance of **controlling** the vast reserves of Middle East oil. This was not just profitable for US oil companies. It meant that the US could exercise control over its friends and enemies alike. It was used to control the development of



Building an oil pipeline between Kazakhstan and China





Bin the Bomb Roadshow March in February 2007

Japan in the decades after the Second World war. Today, control over the world's oil and gas remains central to US strategy. And it is precisely that control which is threatened by the growth of Russian nationalism, driving out the oligarchs and the western oil companies, and the development of land-based pipelines across Asia which bypass American sea power.

Today nuclear weapons are more important and menacing than ever. They remain the cornerstone of the foreign policy of the United States and Britain. They were developed to project power across the world and to threaten annihilation against those who refuse to fall in line. Joseph Gerson, in his recent book *Empire and the Bomb*, describes how the United States has threatened to use its nuclear weapons at least 30 times in the past half century, usually successfully, to get its own way. If it can do that with Mutually





Assured Destruction (MAD) what could it do with overwhelming Nuclear Primacy?

Trident Replacement

And that's where Trident renewal comes in. Britain's Trident submarine fleet with its estimated warhead tally of less than 200, is dwarfed by the American nuclear arsenal. But its political importance is enormous. It symbolises better than anything else our growing subservience to US foreign policy - a policy of war and intervention across the world in support of American interests. And with the deployment of Missile Defence its role is transformed. No longer a 'deterrent', it becomes part of a First Strike force whose warheads will be targetted on the ageing Russian nuclear infrastructure. And with new, highly accurate

warheads, which are expected to replace the existing W76 warheads in the near future, its lethality will be greatly enhanced.

These new and menacing developments should galvanise the peace movement across Britain. Trident is not a relic from the Cold War or an 'insurance policy' against the emergence of a future third world dictator. Combined with Missile Defence it is a blatant First Strike weapon designed to threaten, intimidate, isolate and if necessary destroy an economically resurgent Russia and possibly China. And it will draw us into a new nuclear arms race which we don't want and can't afford.



Trident is already unpopular - 60% of Britons are opposed. In Scotland the opposition is 73% with all the major churches and trade unions, some local authorities and most political parties actively involved in the campaign. An anti-Trident SNP-led government was elected to the Scottish Parliament in May 2007 and a month later that Scottish Parliament overwhelmingly passed a motion calling for the Trident replacement programme to be cancelled. The peace movement must now press home its advantage and mobilise the people against this new threat to world peace.

For the UK to give up its nuclear weapons would not change the strategic 'balance' significantly, but its political impact would be immense. It would give a huge shot in the arm for the forces for peace around the world and could help nudge the next US administration towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention aimed at the abolition of nuclear weapons worldwide. In addition it would leave the United States isolated in pursuing an aggressive first strike strategy and could strengthen the voices raised in the United States against such a policy. Most importantly from Britain's point of view, it would be a vital first step in breaking the 'special relationship' that binds Britain to US foreign policy.

Understanding the real reasons behind these sinister new developments will help us win the political arguments, to get rid of nuclear weapons from Britain and re-establish an independent foreign policy based on the principles of peace and international justice. It is a cause worth fighting for.



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Appendix 1

Main Elements of US Missile Defence

The stated aim of Missile Defence is to develop a system that will knock out incoming ballistic missiles. This involves using advanced x-band radars based in Alaska, California, Greenland, Fylingdales in Britain and the Czech Republic. Interceptors will be deployed in Alaska (40), California (4), Poland (10) and based on ships (130). The interceptors would work by hitting the incoming missile in mid-flight. There would also be missiles to try to destroy incoming missiles in the later stages of their trajectory.

Appendix 2

Encirclement of Russia with military bases

Longstanding US bases in Western Europe:

UK, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany and Turkey.

New permanent bases since 2001:

Bulgaria (4), Romania (4), Poland (1), Czech Republic (1), Kosovo (2), Georgia, Azerbaijan (several), Iraq (6), Afghanistan(3), Pakistan(several), Kuwait (1), Kyrgystan (1), Djibouti (1).



