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Men are fighting...because they are convinced that the extermination of adversaries is the only means of promoting their own well-being.

– Ludwig von Mises

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Crisis Is Upon Us

by Paul Craig Roberts

A number of experts have concluded that despite the Bush administration's desire to attack Iran, the aggression would be too rash and the consequences too dire even for the irrational Bush administration.

Military experts point out that at a time when generals are calling for more troops for Afghanistan and Iraq, it would be ill-advised for Bush to add Iran to the war theater. Experts note that Iran is well armed with missiles capable of attacking U.S. ships and oil facilities throughout the Middle East and that Iran can direct its Shi'ite allies in Iraq to assault U.S. troops there and set in motion terrorist actions throughout the Middle East.

Diplomatic experts point out that the U.S. is isolated in its desire for war with Iran and has no ally except Israel, thus validating Muslim claims that the U.S. is Israel's instrument against Muslims in the Middle East. Experts note that military aggression is a war crime and that American violations of international law isolate the U.S. and destroy the soft power on which U.S. leadership has been based. An attack on Iran could be the last straw for Muslims chafing under the rule of U.S. puppet governments in Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

Economic experts point out that the impact on the price of oil would be severe and the economic consequences detrimental. With the U.S. housing bubble deflating, now is not the time for an oil shock.

It is difficult to take exception to this expert analysis. Nevertheless, the Bush administration continues to send war signals. Credible news organizations have reported that U.S. naval attack groups have been given "prepare to deploy orders" that would put them on station off Iran by Oct. 21.

How can Bush administration war plans be reconciled with expert opinion that the consequences would be too dire for the U.S.?

Perhaps the answer is that what appears as irrationality to experts

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is rationality to neoconservatives. Neocons seek maximum chaos and instability in the Middle East in order to justify long-term U.S. occupation of the region. Following this line of thought, neocons would regard the loss of a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf as a way to solidify public support for the war. American anger at the Iranians could even result in support for a military draft in order to win "the war on terror."

The Bush administration could bring Congress around by announcing a "Gulf of Tonkin" incident or by orchestrating a "terrorist attack." However, this is unnecessary as Bush has prepared the ground for bypassing Congress with his propagandistic allegations that Iran, by arming Iraqi insurgents, sponsoring terrorism, and building nuclear weapons, is a major part of the ongoing "war against terrorism." Now that Iran is blamed for rising violence in Iraq, an attack on Iran follows as a matter of course. All Bush has to do is to continue with his lies in order to bring the American public to a new war hysteria.

Bush's attorney general has demonstrated that he has no qualms about validating any and all extralegal powers that the White House requires for violating the U.S. Constitution and international law. The congressional attempts to block illegal wiretapping and torture have failed. The Senate has refused to authorize torture, but the Senate has not prevented the administration from torturing detainees. The compromise leaves it to the White House to decide by executive order whether its interrogation practices are objectionable. In an editorial, the *Washington Post* concluded that "**the abuse can continue.**"

Polls show that Bush administration propaganda has convinced a majority of inattentive Americans that Iran is making nuclear weapons. Polls show that a majority support an attack on Iran under this circumstance. The neoconservatives and their media allies have succeeded in causing the public to confuse Iran's legal nuclear energy program with a weapons program.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, whose inspectors pore over Iran's nuclear energy program for signs of a weapons program, recently denounced a House Intelligence Committee report as "outrageous and dishonest." Written by the neocon staff, the Republican report falsely alleges that Iran had enriched uranium to weapons-grade last April and that the IAEA had removed a senior safeguards inspector to keep the alleged breach of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Pact secret.

Once again neoconservatives have shown that they will tell any and every lie to achieve their goal of attacking Iran. Jingoistic anti-UN Bush supporters will automatically believe the neocon lie and swallow right-wing talk radio claims that the UN is protecting Iran's nuclear weapons program. As we learned from the Iraq hysteria, facts and experts are no impediment to the Bush administration's lies.

Rumsfeld's neocon Pentagon has rewritten U.S. war doctrine to

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permit preemptive nuclear attack on non-nuclear countries. As the U.S. paid a huge public relations cost in terms of world opinion and distrust of the U.S. by endorsing the first use of nuclear weapons, **the revision of U.S. war doctrine must have a purpose.**

Neocons claim that tactical nuclear weapons are necessary to destroy Iran's underground facilities. However, the real reason for using nukes against Iran is to intimidate Iran from retaliating and to threaten the entire Muslim world with genocide unless Muslims bend to the neocons' will and accept U.S. hegemony over their part of the world.

In his speech to the United Nations, Hugo Chávez might not have been too deep into hyperbole when he described Bush as an example of demonic evil.

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