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The March to War: Iran Preparing for US Air Attacks

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Iran is bracing itself for an expected American-led air campaign. The latter is in the advanced stages of military planning.

If there were to be war between the United States and Iran, the aerial campaign would unleash fierce combat. It would be fully interactive on multiple fronts. It would be a difficult battle involving active movement in the air from both sides.

If war were to occur, the estimates of casualties envisaged by American and British war planners would be high.

The expected wave of aerial attacks would resemble the tactics of the Israeli air-war against Lebanon and would follow the same template, but on a larger scale of execution.

The U.S. government and the Pentagon had an active role in graphing, both militarily and politically, the template of confrontation in Lebanon. The Israeli siege against Lebanon is in many regards a dress rehearsal for a planned attack on Iran.¹

A war against Iran is one that could also include military operations against Syria. Multiple theatres would engulf many of the neighbors of Iran and Syria, including Iraq and Israel/Palestine.

It must also be noted that an attack on Iran would be of a scale which would dwarf the events in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Levant. A full blown war on Iran would not only swallow up and incorporate these other conflicts. It would engulf the entire Middle East and Central Asian region into an extensive confrontation.

An American-led air campaign against Iran, if it were to be implemented, would be both similar and contrasting in its outline and intensity when compared to earlier Anglo-American sponsored confrontations.

The war would start with intense bombardment and attacks on Iran's infrastructure, but would be different in its scope of operations and intensity.

The characteristics of such a conflict would also be unpredictable because of Iran's capabilities to respond. And in all likelihood, Iran would launch its own potent attacks and extend the theatre of war by attacking U.S. and American-led troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf.

The United States must also take into account the fact that Iran unlike Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon would be an opponent with the capability to resist the US sponsored attacks on the ground, but also on the sea and in the air.

Unlike the former opponents faced by the United States and its partners, Iran would be able to target the military launch pads used by the United States. Iran would also be able to attack the U.S. supply and logistical hubs in the Persian Gulf. American ships carrying supplies, troops, and warplanes would be vulnerable to Iranian counter-attacks by way of Iranian missiles, warplanes, and naval forces. It is no mere coincidence that Iran has been demonstrating its military capabilities during the "Blow of Zolfaqar" war games conducted in late August.²

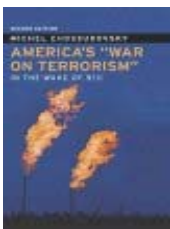
Iranian Preparations for an American-led Air Campaign

The United States has continually threatened to attack Iran. These threats are made under the pretext of halting the development of nuclear weapons in Iran. The development of nuclear weapons by Iran is something the IAEA and its inspectors have refuted as untrue³, but the United

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States insists on continuing the charade as grounds for a military endgame with Iran.

The threat of an American-led attack against Iran with the heavy involvement of Israel and Britain, amongst others, has primed Iran to prepare itself for the anticipated moment. Over the years, this has led Iran to stride for self-sufficiency in producing its own advanced military hardware and the development of asymmetrical tactics to combat the United States.

Iranian defense planners have stated publicly that they have learned from the cases of neighbouring Afghanistan and Iraq. They are acutely aware of the U.S. military's heavy reliance on aerial strikes.

August 2006 saw the start of the virtually unprecedented events of the Blow of Zolfaqar war games throughout Iran and its border provinces.⁴ These were similar to those conducted in April 2006.

The latter were also held during a period of tense confrontation between Iran and the United States.

April 2006 was a period that could have resulted in military conflict between both the United States and Iran. In April 2006, Iran had not only dismissed the deadline set on its nuclear program, but it announced in defiance to the United States that it had successfully enriched uranium for the first time.

Iran has taken the opportunity of the launching of both the April 2006 and Blow of Zolfaqar war games to display its preparedness and capability to engage in combat. Additionally, Iran has taken the occasion to fine tune its defenses and mobilize its military apparatus. This exhibition of Iranian military might is intended to deter America's intent to trigger another Middle Eastern war.

During the war games, the Iranian military has adjusted and modified its air defense shield for maximum dexterity and efficiency in preparation, to stop incoming missiles and invading aircraft.⁵ The war games have been an opportunity for testing of Iranian capacity to wage war in the air

The Iranian military has also reported the testing of laser-guided weaponry, advanced torpedoes, ballistic missiles, anti-ship missiles, bullets that pierce through bullet-proof vests, and electronic military hardware during the Blow of Zolfaqar war games.⁶ Surface-to-surface and ocean-to-surface missiles (submarine-to-surface missiles) in the Persian Gulf were also tested in late-August 2006. These included missiles that are invisible to radar and can use multiple warheads or carry multiple payloads to hit numerous targets simultaneously.

Iran has also tested a "2,000 pound guided-bomb with long-range capabilities." This "2,000 pound bomb" is said to be a "special weapon developed for penetrating military, economic and strategic targets located deep underground or on the soil of the [impending] enemy."⁷ In the case of war, this weapon could be directed against Anglo-American military infrastructure in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf. This guided bomb is an unmanned aircraft carrying an explosive warhead. Following the execution of the Blow of Zolfaqar war games, the Iranian Defense Minister stated that "Iran now joins the few countries that possess guided missile technology,"⁸

Iran has also been manufacturing its own warplanes,⁹ submarines, attack helicopters, tanks, torpedoes, and missiles. This includes remote-controlled modified Maverick Missiles.¹⁰ Brigadier-General Amini, the Deputy Commander of the Air Branch (Air Force) of the Regular Forces, has highlighted that Iran has starting the development and manufacturing of new types of warplanes besides the "Lighting fighter jets" that have been showcased in Northern Iran.¹¹

To discourage the United States in its plans to attack Iran, the Iranian military has additionally been showcasing its abilities to dog fight in the air with its fighter jets.¹² Iranian fighter and bomber jets have been progressively equipped with advanced software and hardware, developed in Iran or by way of technology transfers from China, the Russian Federation, and the republics of the former Soviet Union.

Iranian Commanders have also stated that Iran can track and hit warplanes without using conventional radar. Iran has also been showcasing its signal jamming devices and electronic military hardware, which it compares to NATO standards¹³.

Warnings to the United States To Stop Its War Plans

In Iran military commanders and state officials have also directly warned the United States to halt its march towards war in the Middle East. An account of a statement by Major-General Salehi, commander of the Iranian Army, sums up the generic view of Iranian military officials and planners in the advent of another Middle Eastern war initiated by the United States;

"Pointing to the joint maneuvers to be carried out by the U.S. army [meaning military] and some other countries in the regional waters in the coming days, the General said that the U.S. presence in the region [Middle East] is considered as a threat to the

security of the regional countries, and further warned Washington that in case the U.S. dares to practice threats [by actually attacking], it will then have to face a defeat as bad as the one that the Zionists [Israel] had to sustain in Lebanon."¹⁴

The Iranian Defence Minister has said "that his ministry is now equipping the border units of the army with modern military tools and weapons in a bid to increase their military capabilities,"¹⁵ and "that any possible enemy invasion of Iran will receive a severe blow, adding that failures of alien troops [meaning U.S., British, Coalition, and NATO forces] in Iraq and Afghanistan have taught trans-regional powers extreme caution."¹⁶

Other examples of public warnings by Iranian military commanders directed at the United States and its partners include:

Acting Deputy Commander [Brigadier-General Ahmadi] of the Iranian Mobilized Forces (Basij), noting the intensification of the psychological operations and pressures against Iran, stressed that his troops are fully prepared to encounter "any stupid act by the enemies."¹⁷ (September 9, 2006)

[Brigadier-General Mohammad Hejazi] advised the U.S. to relinquish the idea of invading Iran, stressing that as soon as the U.S. dares to make such a big mistake, it will lose its forged reputation due to its [the U.S. military's] frequent and shocking defeats from the Iranian troops.¹⁸ (September 10, 2006)

[Commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Major-General Safavi has warned that Revolutionary Guard] ground troops form a defensive force, but meantime warned that in case any foreign threats are posed to Iran, [assured that the] IRGC adopts an aggressive strategy and hits enemy targets in strategic depth. He also described the southwestern province of Khuzestan as the most strategic region of the country, saying, "Considering that Khuzestan is a border province located at our sensitive borders with Iraq where British and American occupying troops aim at devising cultural and security plots for Khuzestani people through their intelligence organizations and bodies, IRGC and Basij troops should maintain their preparedness at [the] highest levels possible in order to confront and defuse any such measures by the enemies."¹⁹ (September 13, 2006: Also See *British Troops Mobilizing on the Iranian Border*)

During the August war games, Iranian military commanders claimed, in a gesture directed towards the United States, Britain, and Israel, "that no air force of any power stationed in the Middle East is capable of confronting the Iranian military's ground forces."²⁰

This might seem like a psychological tactic to influence morale on both sides and deter any possible aerial assaults against Iran. This statement cannot be easily overruled if a comprehensive analysis is made and studied. In this regard, one must look at Lebanon, where Hezbollah and the Lebanese Resistance were able to withstand Israeli air raids and overcome the Israeli military on the ground. The Lebanese Resistance is reported as being armed and trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. What would an Iranian defensive of a larger magnitude, with state resources and air capabilities, be like?

The anticipation of a conflict are also coming from Iraq. Iraqi leaders have been charging that the United States and Britain plan on attacking Iran from Iraqi territory. Government representatives of Anglo-American occupied Iraq have asked that Iraq not be turned into a theatre of war between the United States and Iran. "We do not want Iraq to become an arena where other states [i.e., the United States, Britain, and Iran] settle their accounts,"²¹ said the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih while visiting the Iranian capital, Tehran. This message looked as if it was mainly directed at the United States, as well as Iran.

Iran Always a Military Objective for the United States Washington: "Anyone can go to Baghdad! Real Men go to Tehran!"

According to Michel Chossudovsky (*The Next Phase of the Middle East War*, September, 2006), the war on Iran is another phase of a "military roadmap" which includes the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) and the Anglo-American sponsored Israeli siege of Lebanon (2006) as earlier stages.

In May, 2003 after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the motto in Washington D.C. was

"Anyone can go to Baghdad! Real men go to Tehran!"

One should ask why "real" men would continue towards Tehran after the invasion of Iraq. This slogan demonstrates that Iran was an objective or a phase in a broader military operation. With that said, Washington would prefer some form of internal "non-violent" regime change in Iran leading to American control of the Iranian economy and oil resources rather than a high-risk and high cost military confrontation. The shape and nature of this conflict, however, is uncertain.

The possibility of conflict with Iran and a major aerial assault are widely known.

The United States has been planning to attack Iran for years. Colonel Sam Gardiner (Retired, U.S. Air Force) has stated that the campaign against Iran is one where "the issue is not whether the military option would be used, but who approved the start of operations already."

The March to War with Iran and Syria

With time fleeting, the Iranian military is positioning itself in battle formations under the pretext of nationwide war games and other pretexts. Iran has been steadily strengthening its air defenses and air units in preparation for the possibility of strikes. Iranian and Syrian coordination is also intensifying with the passing of time.

An attack on Iran and Syria would be a combination of heavy air bombardment by the U.S. Air Force, including the U.S. Army's air units. It would also include a ground offensive led by the U.S. Marines and Army from the American bases surrounding both Iran and Syria. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard would predominately manage the theatre of war in the Persian Gulf, with a view to guaranteeing the unimpeded flow of oil through the strategic Straits of Hormuz.

The Israeli military would deal with military operations in the Levant. Both Israeli troops and Israeli public opinion are being prepared for the possibility of another Middle Eastern conflict. In this context, Israel would face the possibility of aerial assaults from Iran. Iran has threatened to retaliate if it is attacked, using its ballistic missiles.

British and Australian forces in southern Iraq would deploy with the strategic aim of occupying the Iranian province of Khuzestan and securing its oil. Khuzestan is where most of Iran's oil fields are located. Meanwhile a naval build-up is developing in the Persian Gulf which also includes the U.S. Coast Guard and the Canadian Navy.

The United States and its partners meanwhile are continuing to marshal and siphon their forces into the Middle East and Afghanistan. Both the United States and Britain have promised troop reductions in Iraq, but are actually increasing their troop levels. It also seems that a muzzle is being placed on Lebanon to stop any attacks on Israel by the presence of troops from member states of NATO.

Syria also seems to be expecting a possible aerial campaign. A vessel sailing to Syria under the flag of Panama, the "Grigorio I," has been reported to have been stopped off the coast of Cyprus transporting 18 truck-mounted mobile radar systems and three command vehicles for delivery to Syria. This equipment appears to be part of an air defence system.²²

In Iran, the Intelligence Minister has warned that "enemies are seeking to create instability in Iran through different measures, including assassinations, explosions and extensive insecurities" and that "his forces, in cooperation and coordination with other governmental bodies, have defused enemies' plots in different Iranian provinces, including Tehran."²³

Venezuela has also threatened to halt oil exports in the event of an Anglo-American aggression against Iran and Syria. Venezuela has gone on to caution that it will defend Iran "under threat of invasion from the United States." This was a warning given to the United States by Venezuela during the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cuba.²⁴

The United States has already started to target both Iran and Syria's financial bodies and institutions in an act of economic warfare. Syria has in step with Iran taken "preventative steps" in early 2006 by switching from using the U.S. dollar to using the Euro for all its transactions. The head of the state-owned Syria Commercial Bank has said that such measures have been taken to protect Syria from American sanctions (economic warfare).²⁵

Actions have been taken against the large, state-owned Bank Saderat of Iran by the United States.²⁶ The Bank Saderat has been cut off from the U.S. financial system and its network(s). This is part of a deliberate objective to financially cut off Iran from the rest of the world. Three large Japanese banks, the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Mizuho Corporate Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation have followed in step and will terminate business with Bank Saderat.²⁷

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