



Nation



World Updates



Courts

Additional Photos. Extra Descriptions. Increased Visibility.

Only available @ **ClassifiedsPlus**

Parliament

Columnists

Opinion

Fight Crime

Archives

C O L U M N I S T S

Go elsewhere

News

Search

[Columnists](#) > [Midweek](#)

Wednesday October 3, 2007

US gearing up for war with Iran, despite denials

MIDWEEK BY BUNN NAGARA

AFTER weeks of speculation over a US military attack on Iran, events moved closer towards war this week.

Last Friday attempts by the United States, Britain and France to push for new sanctions against Iran at the UN Security Council were blocked by Russia and China as the other permanent five council members.

As before, frustrating such attempted measures could be less an indication of no action at all than a sign of an alternative military option. As with Iraq in 2003, UN consensus even at Security Council level was never needed for an illegal war.

Washington argues that Iran is planning to build a nuclear bomb, despite Teheran's insistence that its nuclear project is only for generating electricity. Again as with Iraq before, no proof of the existence of any "weapons of mass destruction" is needed to start a war for the purpose.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said last week that the subject of his country's nuclear project was a closed issue, to be handled by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency. US hawks are concerned that this would take the matter out of US hands and prevent the possibility of a unilateral war.

Leading neo-conservatives, US Zionists and Israeli officials hope to keep the option of such a war open, even likely. Some of them, like the influential Norman Podhoretz, have recently consulted privately with President George W. Bush in pushing for war.

The US position is that all options against Iran are on the table, including unilateral pre-emptive strikes. Meanwhile, US sources have been instructed to dig up the dirt on Iran to justify imminent military action, to add to claims that Iran is already breaching two sets of UN sanctions.

However, outgoing British ambassador to the United States Sir David Manning played down the prospect of war as he prepared to leave office this week. He said he is unaware of any definite plans for war, differentiating between what is

Sponsored Links

- [War in Iraq](#)
- [Bush Administration](#)
- [Air Force](#)
- [United States War on Terror](#)
- [Military Survey](#)
- [Arab News](#)
- [British Soldiers](#)
- [Troops](#)
- [Army America](#)
- [Going to War over Oil](#)

Most Viewed

- [Bush holds up N.Korea as possible model for Iran](#)
- [Momentum building for cluster bomb ban - activists](#)
- [North Korea agrees to disable reactor by year-end](#)
- [CORRECTED - Iraq insurgents form front under ex-Saddam aide - TV](#)
- [Bush holds up N.Korea as possible model for Iran](#)
- [Iraq insurgents form front under ex-Saddam aide - TV](#)
- [U.S., Russia sign pact to hunt for water on Mars, moon](#)

being discussed and what is happening on the ground.

All of this is eerily familiar, including Sir David's not being consulted on a war. Britain as Washington's "closest ally" could be handed a *fait accompli* on the battlefield again after the White House and the Pentagon have made their plans.

The State Department reportedly prefers a combination of sanctions and diplomacy to war. But it is under pressure to deliver, and its position could be weakening.

Events on the ground are now drifting to a war early next year, if not late this year. US and Israeli hardliners see Israel's recent air attack on Syria as a successful "dry run" against Iran.

On Sunday, British news reports said the US air force and its equivalents in Gulf allies Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have also stepped up joint training in a prospective air attack on Iranian nuclear installations.

The scenario apparently does not depict direct involvement by these Gulf states in a war. However, senior military and government leaders in these countries have bought into the idea that key assistance to US forces like logistics, refuelling and use of air space will not implicate them in the war per se.

Meanwhile, Iran has some options to forestall a military attack, including pulling support from Hamid Karzai's Afghanistan where the Taliban are making gains while British forces withdraw to US dismay. But while this may delay, deflect, distract or even dislocate the US war machine, it may not be enough to stop a new war.

Seeing the US-Israel connection in a possible attack, Iran has threatened to retaliate against Israel with missiles if it is attacked. But even this may not deter unilateralists smitten with war mania.

Bush is not running for re-election next year, and the Republican Party looks increasingly unlikely to win as well. So the White House could well pull a "hat trick" with a third war in two terms, leaving the mess and the costs to a new Democratic administration.

The Democrats would be wise to stop impending war plans, but are unlikely to. Leading presidential contenders like Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards recently showed they could not even withdraw from the second war in Iraq, despite their party's Congressional mandate for them to do so.

