Why is the US press silent on Brzezinski's warnings of war against Iran?

Barry Grey in Washington DC
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The major national newspapers and most broadcast outlets failed even to report Thursday's stunning testimony by former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter, is among the most prominent figures within the US foreign policy establishment. He delivered a scathing critique of the war in Iraq and warned that the policy of the Bush administration was leading inevitably to a military confrontation with Iran which would have disastrous consequences for US imperialism.

Most significant and disturbing was Brzezinski's suggestion that the Bush administration might manufacture a pretext to justify a military attack on Iran. Presenting what he called a "plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran," Brzezinski laid out the following series of events: "Iraqi failure to meet the benchmarks, followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure, then by some *provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the US blamed on Iran*, culminating in, quote/unquote, 'defensive' US military action against Iran..." [Emphasis added].

Thus Brzezinski opined that a US military attack on Iran would be an aggressive action, presented as though it were a defensive response to alleged Iranian provocations, and came close to suggesting, without explicitly stating as much, that the White House was capable of manufacturing or allowing a terrorist attack within the US to provide a casus belli for war.

It is self-evident that such testimony at an open congressional hearing from someone with decades of experience in the US foreign policy establishment and the closest ties to the military and intelligence apparatus is not only newsworthy, but of the most immense and grave import. Any objective and conscientious newspaper or news channel would consider it an obligation to inform the public of such a development.

Yet neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* carried so much as a news brief on Brzezinski's testimony in their Friday editions. Nor did *USA Today* or the *Wall Street Journal*. All of these publications, of course, have well-staffed Washington bureaus and regularly cover congressional hearings—especially those dealing with such burning political questions as the war in Iraq.

There is no innocent explanation for their decision to suppress this story. The *Washington Post* on Thursday published a large page-two column and photo on Henry Kissinger's appearance the previous day before the same Senate committee. The former secretary of state under Richard Nixon gave testimony that was generally supportive of the Bush administration's war policy.

Moreover, the *Post*'s web edition carried an Associated Press report on Brzezinski's appearance. That article introduced subtle but significant changes to Brzezinski's speculative scenario of the road to war with Iran which had the effect of underplaying the sharpness and urgency of Brzezinski's critique of the Bush administration. It omitted the suggestion that a terrorist attack *within the US* could become the justification for war, and it removed the quotation marks from Brzezinski's talk of a "defensive" war against Iran.

The *World Socialist Web Site* on Friday telephoned the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* to ask for an explanation for their failure to report Brzezinski's testimony. None of the newspapers returned our calls.

As for the television news outlets, the "News Hour

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with Jim Lehrer" on PBS showed a clip of Brzezinski laying out his war scenario before the Senate committee, without making any comment. "NBC Nightly News" ignored the story entirely.

The suppression of this damning critique of the Iraq war, the conspiratorial methods of the Bush administration, and its drive to an even wider war in the Middle East is one more demonstration of the corrupt and reactionary character of the American mass media. It indicates that the establishment media is preparing once again, as in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, to serve as a sounding board for the administration's war propaganda and lies.

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