

IAEA dossier heightens danger of war against Iran

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report on Iran's nuclear program published Tuesday is a highly political document drawn up at the behest of the US and its allies to set the stage for a reckless campaign of aggression against Tehran. The report recalls the dossiers produced by the US and Britain in 2002 based on a crude mixture of half-truths, lies and fabrications that were used to justify the criminal invasion of Iraq.

In order to overcome the overwhelming public distrust generated by the Iraq war, the US has been pressing the IAEA for years to put its seal of approval on "evidence" that Iran is seeking to build nuclear weapons. The vast bulk of material contained in the latest IAEA report is not new, but was supplied to the UN body over the past decade by American, European and Israeli intelligence agencies.

In October 2009, a confidential IAEA document summing up the intelligence supplied by Western agencies and entitled "Possible Military Dimensions of Iran's Nuclear Program" was leaked to the *New York Times*. The leak was a deliberate attempt to circumvent then-IAEA Director Mohamed ElBaradei, who was critical of its dubious content and refused to publish it.

In 2002, ElBaradei earned Washington's undying enmity when he flatly contradicted the US lie that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons.

In December 2009, the US and its allies finally succeeded in replacing ElBaradei with a more pliable IAEA director, Yukiya Amano. As Amano himself explained to a top US diplomat in a cable subsequently published by WikiLeaks, he was "solidly in the US court on every key strategic decision, from high-level personnel appointments to the handling of Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program."

The key annex to Amano's latest report, again entitled "Possible Military Dimensions to Iran's Nuclear Program," is striking only for the paucity of additional evidence.

Central to the allegations is information supplied to the IAEA by the US in 2005 about the so-called "alleged studies" by Iran into aspects of constructing a nuclear bomb. The source of more than 1,000 pages of what were purportedly Iranian documents was said to have been a laptop obtained by American intelligence.

Iran has declared the documents to be forgeries and neither the originals nor the laptop have been handed to the IAEA. Speaking to the *Hindu* newspaper in 2009, ElBaradei declared that there was "a major question of authenticity" of the laptop documents.

Amano clearly has no qualms about basing his case on documents that might well have been fabricated by Israeli or US intelligence agencies. Indeed, despite its turgid language, his report is an overtly polemical document that pays no heed to Iranian objections and accepts as good coin information supplied by the intelligence agencies of unnamed member states.

It is noteworthy therefore that his conclusion is very cautious: that prior to 2003 Iran had "a structured program" of "activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device" and "some activities may still be ongoing."

The wording of the final phrase, even though tentative, was critical to the US and its allies, which have been pushing to overturn the conclusion of a joint assessment by American intelligence agencies in 2007 that any Iranian nuclear weapons program ended in 2003.

The Obama administration, like its predecessor, is well aware that it can count on a compliant, corrupt and uncritical media to sensationalise and inflate limited

activities of nearly a decade ago into an imminent nuclear danger. The process is already underway, with a rash of unscrupulous articles in the international press exploiting the IAEA report to claim that Iran is on the verge of manufacturing a nuclear weapon.

As in the case of Iraq, the allegations about Iranian weapons of mass destruction are nothing but a threadbare pretext for aggression against Tehran, including further sanctions and ultimately military attack. The media commentators denouncing Iran as a threat to regional peace and calling for tough action ignore the fact that the only two countries to initiate wars of aggression in the Middle East in the past decade have been the US and Israel. Moreover, while condemning Iran for allegedly seeking nuclear weapons, there is an utterly hypocritical silence over the known nuclear arsenals of the regional allies of American imperialism—Pakistan, India and above all Israel.

The menacing US campaign against Iran is driven by Washington's ambition for dominance in the key energy-rich regions of the Middle East and Central Asia. The Bush administration was compelled to give up its aim to move against Tehran after toppling the Baghdad regime, as the US military became embroiled in deepening quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the US has never given up its plans for regime-change in Iran, which Washington regards as a major obstacle to its hegemony despite overtures from Iran's Islamist leaders for a rapprochement.

The deepening global economic crisis is propelling Washington into new and even more reckless military adventures, both as a means of undermining its rivals, especially China, and as a diversion from the explosive social tensions at home. Flush from "victory" in Libya and the installation of a client regime in Tripoli, sections of the American political establishment are already identifying Iran as the next target.

At this stage, the Obama administration is calling for more sanctions rather than signalling military action, but others are not so reticent. An opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* on Tuesday dismissed sanctions as an unviable option and called for a "real debate" whether to allow a nuclear-armed Iran or to use military force to stop it—making clear it favoured the latter.

The drive to war against Iran is further facilitated by the fact that the entire fraternity of liberals and pseudo-

radicals have already given their support for American militarism in the US-NATO colonialist war in Libya. The political groundwork for a campaign to wage a war for "democracy" against Iran was laid two years ago, when virtually all of the ex-left organisations lined up with the US-sponsored Green movement in its attempt to overturn the results of Iran's presidential election in favour of an opposition candidate more amenable to Washington's interests.

Workers and youth must oppose the mounting threat of war against Iran, which has the very real danger of engulfing the region and triggering a calamitous international conflict. However, political lessons have to be learnt from the failure of previous protests—above all, the unprecedented global demonstrations against the Iraq war in 2002—to prevent the eruption of militarism.

No amount of pressure on capitalist governments will halt the drive to war. Rather, what is required is the building of an independent political movement of the international working class on the basis of a socialist program to abolish the root cause of war, which lies in the profit system and the historically outmoded division of the world into nation states to which capitalism is wedded.

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