

# US elections conceal preparations for war with Iran

**Barry Grey****27 September 2012**

Within American ruling circles, it is well known that plans for war against Iran are far advanced, but there is a conspiracy of silence by both political parties and the media to keep this reality out of the presidential election. The intent is to drag the American people into yet another bloody war in the Middle East on the basis of false pretexts and lies, despite broad popular opposition to an attack on Iran.

Nothing reveals the anti-democratic and fraudulent character of the elections more clearly than the refusal to explain to the American people the military carnage that is being prepared in their name and allow them to express their democratic will.

Over the past week, a number of commentaries in the American and European press have warned of an attack by either Israel or the US, or both, against Iran in the near future, and a bipartisan group of former foreign policy officials, retired generals and former legislators has issued a report outlining the potentially catastrophic consequences of an unprovoked attack on the Persian Gulf country.

Some of the recent articles have the character of a pre-emptive political strike by ruling class figures wary of a war against Iran, while others suggest that such a war is necessary and inevitable. The confluence of such commentaries is itself an indication that detailed planning for war is underway.

At the United Nations on Tuesday, President Obama reiterated that the US will "do what we must" to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney is pressing for greater US security guarantees to Israel, whose prime minister, Benyamin Netanyahu, has criticized Obama for not moving quickly enough to launch military action.

But beyond such general threats, the reality of advanced plans for war is being concealed.

The *National Journal* on Monday posted an article

entitled "The Path to War with Iran." The article, prompted by a conference held last Friday by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on the subject of US-Israeli coordination against Iran, began by noting the significance of Obama's speech last March before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "Obama announced a new policy that put the United States and Iran on a collision course from which neither has veered," the author wrote.

"Iran's leaders should understand that I do not have a policy of containment," Obama declared at the time. "I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon... I will not hesitate to use force when it is necessary to defend the United States and its interests."

Commenting on the implications of Obama rejecting a policy of "containing" a nuclear Iran, the author wrote: "Either Tehran would have to abandon its suspected nuclear weapons program, or the president was all but pledging a preventive war to destroy it."

He then noted that Washington has deployed the largest US naval armada to the Persian Gulf in years and that the US Senate last Friday passed a bipartisan resolution, cosponsored by more than three-fourths of the chamber, ruling out a strategy of containment in regard to Iran.

The article quoted David Makovsky, an Israel "expert" and senior fellow at the Washington Institute, saying that the next administration, whether headed by Obama or Romney, will be under "intense pressure" to launch a military attack on the oil-rich country. Patrick Clawson, an Iran "expert" and director of research at the Washington Institute, said that, "[R]ight now we are headed towards war."

The German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published an article on Monday headlined "Dangerous War Rhetoric" that began: "When everyone is talking of war, a spark is sufficient to ignite one."

The article compared the current situation in the Middle

East to the eve of World War I, warning, “From a European perspective, things seem much like Europe in 1914.” It went to say that war could be set off by “an unplanned incident between US and Iranian ships in the Persian Gulf, a miscalculation of the Israeli or of the Iranian military, or a significant terrorist attack.”

Albert Hunt, Washington editor at Bloomberg News, published an article in *Newsday*, also last Monday, headlined “Americans Deserve a Pre-Emptive Debate on Attacking Iran.” He began: “The last two presidents have misled voters on the cost of armed conflicts. Amid another election, the drumbeats of war are sounding again. This time the subject is Iran. To paraphrase Ronald Reagan: Here we go again.”

Some of the disastrous consequences such a war could have were spelled out in a report released last week by the Iran Project, a bipartisan panel of former leading US diplomats, military officers and congressmen.

They wrote, “Even in order to fulfill the stated objective of ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear bomb, the US would need to conduct a substantially expanded air and sea war over a prolonged period of time, likely several years. If the US decided to seek a more ambitious objective, such as regime change in Iran or undermining Iran’s influence in the region, then an even greater commitment of force would be required to occupy all or part of the country. Given Iran’s large size and population, and the strength of Iranian nationalism, we estimated that the occupation of Iran would require a commitment of resources and personnel greater than what the US has expended over the past 10 years in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.”

The report pointed to risks of “all-out regional war” in the Middle East, of unidentified allies of Iran (such as Russia or China) acting to help Iran repel US attacks, and of a global economic collapse.

There is also the possibility that the US or Israel might employ nuclear weapons. During the 2008 Democratic primary campaign, Hillary Clinton threatened to “obliterate” Iran.

The American ruling class has a long history of organizing wars of aggression behind the backs of the American people. President Lyndon Johnson ran for election in 1964 pledging to avoid a major war in Vietnam, even as he was planning to escalate the US intervention. He notoriously told the military brass, “Just let me get elected, and then you can have your war.”

In the 2000 presidential election, plans for an attack on Iraq were concealed by both Bush and Gore. In the 2002

mid-term election, the Democrats made a calculated decision, despite broad popular opposition to Bush’s war plans, not to discuss the advanced preparations for an invasion.

In 2008, Obama postured as an anti-war candidate, and proceeded once in office to continue the war in Iraq, expand the carnage in Afghanistan and extend US military aggression and subversion to Pakistan, Libya and Syria.

Whatever pledges of military action Obama and Romney may have given Netanyahu, they are for criminal acts of aggression carried out with contempt for US and Israeli public opinion. A recent poll by the Chicago Council for Global Affairs found 70 percent opposition in America to a US strike on Iran. Another poll found only 32 percent support in Israel for an Israeli strike.

This is a damning indictment of American capitalism and of the American political system. Even after hundreds of thousands of lives were lost and trillions of dollars squandered in unpopular wars for US control of the oil-rich Middle East, US imperialism is pressing ahead with plans for a new, even deadlier war.

The American people must be warned: A vast crime is being prepared behind your backs and in your name! Unless the war criminals in the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA are disarmed and held to account, ever-more bloody regional wars will coalesce into another global conflagration.

The working class is the social force that can prevent this, but only if it breaks free of the Democratic Party and the two-party system and takes the path of mass political struggle for the overthrow of the capitalism, the root cause of war, and the establishment of socialism.

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