

Israelis, British set up Iran for strike

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

In 1981, the Israelis launched a military operation which succeeded in bombing the Osirak nuclear plant, being constructed by Iraq. The rationale behind the aggressive act, which was accepted by the “international community” at the time, was that, had Israel not taken the step, the regime of Saddam Hussein would soon have been in possession of a nuclear weapon, capable of wiping out Israel. The Thatcher-Bush war against Iraq in 1990-91, and the continuing embargo against that nation, have been viewed by the British strategists of the operation, as the final act in the containment of Iraq.

With precisely the same methods and rationale, the same constellation of British and Israeli forces is mounting an assault against the other giant in the Persian Gulf, Iran. Unless the fraud of the “nuclear scare” is unmasked and defeated, there is a serious danger, that a military strike against Iran could be launched by the insane government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

The nature of the fraud

The campaign waged against Iran, on grounds that the country has been pursuing the production of weapons of mass destruction, is a witting fraud, and has been proven to be such, by recent developments related to a major oil deal, also involving Iran.

The gist of the matter is the following: The argument used to rationalize sabotage of Iran’s nuclear energy sector, has been, that the only reason Teheran seeks this technology, is to develop an atomic bomb, with which to threaten its neighbors. The “proof” of this line of argument has been, that since Iran has so much oil and natural gas, it does not need nuclear power. One would assume, therefore, that any further development of Iran’s natural resources, would be applauded by the anti-nuclear crowd.

On the contrary: As the news was released on Sept. 29, that Iran had signed a deal with the French, Russian, and Malaysian oil and gas companies, for gas exploration in Iran, the alarm bells started ringing, and threats to impose sanctions against Iran’s trade partners were issued from Washington. No nuclear threat here. Why, then, the hysteria? In this case, the other handy argument was pulled off the shelves, and offered for the credulous: No such deal should be allowed to go through, because Iran would presumably use the additional revenues created to finance its alleged support for international terrorism.

The anti-Eurasian Land-Bridge policy

The actual policy considerations behind the obvious fraud are quite straightforward: Iran is the most important nation, geographically, strategically, and economically, on the western end of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, the new Silk Road infrastructure development project which the Chinese government has been implementing over the last decade. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the emergence of the newly independent Central Asian Republics (CAR), Iran has established diplomatic and economic relations with these nations, and created new rail links, which have opened up the route for the CAR to the Persian Gulf, as well as to Europe. Iran’s completion in May 1996 of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan stretch of railway, provided the missing link in a transport network joining China to Europe. It is this transcontinental rail and economic development program, which geopolitical interests based in Britain have historically opposed, and have blocked or contained, by war, among other means.

In its commitment to the Silk Road perspective, Iran has not limited its cooperative agreements to the CAR, but has very deliberately enhanced relations with Russia and, of

course, China, which is leading the effort. Iran has also intervened, where possible, to help mediate negotiated solutions to regional conflicts, which were impeding development; efforts are ongoing in Azerbaijan-Armenia and Afghanistan, whereas in Tajikistan, Iran and Russia together managed to broker a truce in a dangerously expanding civil war.

Regionally, Iran has been pursuing with some success rapprochement with its Arab neighbors, including Saudi Arabia and Iraq, thus opening the possibility for greatly enhanced economic development through cooperation with them. Finally, Iran has been assuming a more prominent role within regional economic organizations, like the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the new Development-8 (D-8) grouping, which, in turn, have strengthened their ties to groups like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In December, Teheran is to host the annual summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OCI), which is the largest such grouping.

These are among the reasons why Iran is being targeted.

The origins of the fraud

It was the British press during the summer which revived the “nuclear scare” story. The *Observer* carried an account of an Iranian-British businessman named Hossein Jafari, who was detected shopping for a spectrometer in Britain; although the man claimed he wanted it for gold prospecting in Abu Dhabi, the *Observer* pronounced that the instrument was used primarily in construction of nuclear weapons. In August, again, it was the British press that provided “proof” of the bomb plot. The *Times* ran the story that Reza Amrollahi, the head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, had gone to meet South Africa’s Pik Botha and Atomic Energy Commission director Dr. Waldo Stumpf, with a shopping list of components to build nuclear bombs. Although Stumpf denied the meeting ever took place, and Botha said that he had “discussed the possible peaceful application of nuclear energy,” specifying that it was “when I went to Iran,” nonetheless, the “veteran correspondent Al J. Venter” swore that they had discussed bomb material. Venter’s story first appeared on Aug. 15, in the Johannesburg *Mail & Guardian*, which received an “advanced copy” from the Jane’s Information Group in London. Shortly after the report appeared on the Internet and in the press, a hue and cry was raised in Washington. President Clinton issued his new Executive Order “prohibiting transactions with Iran,” on Aug. 19.

The Russian angle was then introduced into the “bomb plot,” through the good graces of the Israeli Mossad. William Safire provided a rare service to the world, by revealing some uncomfortable facts, in an article in the Sept. 28 *Washington Post*. Entitled “Iran Girds for War,” Safire laid bare the role of the Israeli Mossad in cooking up the “intelligence” on Iran’s alleged nuclear capability. Complaining that the Mossad had warned in the 1980s that Iraq were building nuclear weapons, and had not been heeded, Safire wrote, “One year



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The threat that he may bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities, in concert with British geopolitical interests, is one more reason the President Clinton must use his power to help remove this madman from office.

ago, Israel shared with our Defense Intelligence Agency Mossad’s evidence and conclusions about a new proliferation threat from a supporter of terrorism.” Safire says that it was already known, that Iran was developing “nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.” But, what was not known, until the Mossad kindly shared its intelligence, was: “Massive Russian assistance and close cooperation with Iran are enabling the Iranian regime to develop independent capabilities to produce medium-range ballistic missile systems within a very short time.” Safire explained that no regional power would worry, if Iran built only short-range missiles; however, “technical and humint [human intelligence] sources revealed . . . Shahab-3 and Shahab-4, missiles ranging up to 1,240 miles and threatening many capitals.” Safire wrote that President Clinton brought up the charges, in talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin during the Denver summit, but “did not want to use space aid or IMF [International Monetary Fund] support for coercion.” At this point, according to Safire’s account, “Israel then went public.” Bill Gertz of the *Washington Times* wrote an exclusive article, detailing some of the Mossad’s findings, corroborated by U.S. intelligence. “Congress,” he said, “is now awake to Russia’s breach of its arms proliferation agreement.”

It was at that point, that Vice President Al Gore brought up the allegations, in talks with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in Moscow. Gore cited a U.S. intelligence report, which showed “a vigorous effort by Iran to obtain the technologies it needs to build a ballistic missile and to build nuclear weapons.” The Russian diplomat refused to break trade relations with Iran, and proposed a form of joint monitoring, to be overseen by Russian space agency head Yuri Koptev and U.S. diplomat Frank Wisner.

Safire’s account continues, to amplify the Russian complicity in the Iranian “bomb plot”: “In addition to the secret missile help, hundreds of Russian scientists are openly in Iran building its Bushehr ‘civilian’ reactor.” And he adds the standard line: “But Iran sits on a sea of cheap oil energy; its only reason for a nuclear reactor is to produce plutonium isotopes for bombs.” In conclusion, Safire makes a statement of remarkable clarity, identifying his actual concerns, and those, presumably, of his friends in the Mossad: “We see developing a fundamental split in the strategic view of Israel and the Clinton administration over matters affecting national survival. Israel’s Netanyahu views Iran, whose warheads could incinerate Tel Aviv, as Israel’s greatest threat.”

The upshot of Safire’s piece, is that Clinton has prioritized relations with Russia, and “accordingly he tolerates Russia’s open and secret support of Iran’s bid for nuclear missile coverage of Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.” Stating that the United States and Israel should “act unilaterally,” trusting that their allies will understand, Safire recommends: “Mr. Gore should sit down with Mr. Clinton to reassess his Russian priority.”

The political thrust behind Safire’s intervention, is clear: that it is not only Iran which is a problem, but Clinton’s insistence on maintaining good relations with Russia—a crucial partner in any U.S. policy initiative, to reorganize world monetary and economic structures.

The Israeli problem

It is not just the Mossad, which has campaigned for action against Iran. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai stated in July, that Israel would “use any means” to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power.

Unfortunately, this is one area on which a consensus exists within the otherwise factionalized political landscape of Israel. In an interview with the German daily *Frankfurter Rundschau* on Sept. 20, Israeli former Prime Minister Shimon Peres was unequivocal. Asked, “What is today the greatest threat to Israel, terrorism from outside or the internal confrontation between Orthodox and liberal Jews?” he answered, “The greatest threat is Iran with its new, non-conventional warheads. This is dangerous for us, the Near East and for Europe.” In his book, *The New Middle East*, Peres had presented his conviction, which he had developed from the very beginning of Israel’s existence, that the most important factor for his country, was its development of a nuclear capability.

Israel, in possession of that capability today, without having signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), sees its monopoly over this technology as essential to its national security. The danger that the current government of madman Benjamin Netanyahu, could be tempted to try a preemptive strike against Iran’s Bushehr plant, is real. Amir Oren explicitly urged Netanyahu to do so, in a feature article in the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz*. The article, entitled “Similar to Begin’s Decision to Bomb the Iraqi Reactor, Netanyahu’s Political Crisis and Reports of Security Agencies, Might Push Him to Bomb Iran’s Nuclear Reactor,” argues that the time is ripe for a strike. This is one more good reason, for President Clinton to use his political muscle, to relieve the region of Netanyahu.

Iran’s nuclear program

The history of nuclear energy in Iran goes back to the Shah’s time. In March 1973, following the oil price rise, and the fourfold increase in Iran’s oil revenues, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi decided to launch a nuclear energy program, as part of the industrialization process., according to a report published on May 27, 1995 in the morning daily paper, *Iran*, by Dr. Mostafa Taqizadeh Ansari on the Iranian nuclear program. Dr. Ansari recounts that the Atomic Energy Organization was established for the purpose. Iran had joined the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969, and signed contracts for construction of plants with France and Germany. The German Kraftwerk Union (KWU) was to build two pressurized water nuclear reactors, of 1,190 megawatts each, at Hali-leh, near Bushehr, on the Persian Gulf. According to the agreement of 1977, there was to be cooperation on “Research, scientific and technological development, formulation of a project to set up and exploit nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities, training of Iranian skilled manpower, securing the safety of nuclear facilities including radion protection, fuels, use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes other than energy generation ,” and so forth. A memo of understanding was signed, in addition, for four cool-water power plants, of 1,200 megawatts, in central Iran. Two further 1,200 megawatt nuclear power stations were to be built with Brown Boverie. In all, there were eight power plants to be built with German cooperation.

In March 1976, Iran signed an agreement with French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. This involved the construction of six nuclear power plants, built by Framatome. Like the German plants, these were never completed, due to the revolution of 1979, which halted construction, and the war with Iraq which lasted until 1988.

Negotiations had also gone on with the United States, beginning with the 1968 trilateral agreement including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which authorized inspection of Iran’s plants, to be built by the United States. In 1975, contacts were made with American companies for the purchase of six to eight nuclear plants, but, accord-

ing to the *Iran* account by Dr. Ansari, this did not go through Congress.

Fuel for the ambitious nuclear program, was to be provided either by those transferring the technology (KWU and Framatome), for ten years, or through the exploration and enrichment of uranium in Iran. Iran entered into agreements with the consortia Eurodif and Coredif, purchasing 10% and 25% of their shares, respectively, and purchased 28,000 tons of uranium from other countries.

What Iran would like to do at present, is to complete the work begun on the nuclear plants, beginning with the Bushehr plant. As detailed in an article in *Iran News*, on a report, "Iran Exports and Imports," March-April 1995, the contract between Iran and Russia was signed on Jan. 8, 1995. The Russian atomic energy minister conducted the negotiations with the head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO), Dr. Amrollahi. According to the contract, Russia was to complete the 1,000-megawatt Bushehr plant within four years. The deal was worth \$1 billion, of which \$800 million was in foreign exchange, and the rest in Iranian currency. As explained in the report, "The major difference between the present design and work plan, with the original plan designed by the Germans, lies in the method of transfer of the necessary technology and know-how: the Russians have undertaken to train Iranians to make up the personnel required and today [1995], already 500 or so Iranian engineers and technicians are in Russia receiving instruction and being trained in various Russian power plants. At the same time they are supervising the manufacture of the parts that will ultimately make up the plant at Bushehr."

Even following the war with Iraq, 85% of the plant construction survived, and 95% of the parts were available, but, according to the report, the remaining 7,000 tons of equipment and parts were not delivered by Germany. Through international arbitration, Iran had succeeded in 1981, in pressuring Germany to deliver some of the parts, but not all. It was in October 1990, after the Iranian Foreign Ministry found out, in negotiations with the Germans, that they had been pressured by other states not to deliver the parts, that Iran sought another partner.

In the contract with Russia, the first of the two power plants contracted to Germany, will be completed, then negotiations will take place on the second plant. In an interview with *Iran News*, Dr. Amrollahi was asked what the Bushehr plant would offer Iran. He answered, "First of all, by spending \$1 billion on the plant, the amount of the contract with Russia, Iran will save \$10 billion of material and parts that were left unused and wasting away. . . . Next, the power plant will oblige and help us to increase our knowledge in many relevant fields, such as quality control and safety, which are indispensable in nuclear plants. . . . Thirdly, the province of Bushehr, where the plant site is situated, will benefit greatly and this relatively deprived area will develop socially and economically." As for the technology transfer, Dr. Amrollahi ex-

plained, "We intend to run the plant with Iranian personnel, entirely."

The Iranian nuclear project is not limited to the production of energy, but is also geared toward the production of medical products. With their cyclotron in Karaj, near Teheran, Dr. Amrollahi explained, the accelerator "has the power of 30 million electron volts for accelerating protons and 15 million electron volts for accelerating electrons." This will be used to produce thallium-201 and barium-67, used to treat heart diseases. In a third phase, to be completed in 1997, Iran hopes to produce iodine-123 and indium-111. And a fourth phase foresees the production of positron emission tomography, for medical uses.

Finally, as Dr. Amrollahi noted, Iran also has a contract with China, for the construction of two 300-megawatt plants.

As a signator to the NPT, Iran is open to inspections by the IAEA. During the most recent tour of inspections, in July, IAEA Secretary General Hans Blix expressed the agency's "satisfaction" with Iran's nuclear program. Blix inspected all Iran's nuclear facilities, including the Karaj nuclear research center in Teheran province, for agricultural and nuclear medical research. After visiting the facilities, he "confirmed Iran's use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes" and "expressed hope that products of this center would be used in other countries of Middle East and Central Asia," according to an account given by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

At the 41st meeting of the General Assembly of the IAEA which opened in Vienna on Sept. 29, the current head of Iran's IAEO, Gholamreza Aqazadeh, reiterated Iran's commitment to the peaceful use of the technology, and reminded the gathering that Iran had been calling for a nuclear-free zone in the region for 20 years. According to a report in the daily *Ettela'at* of Oct. 2, he lamented the fact that the technology is being hampered by political considerations, and said, "Some nuclear states, have unfortunately engaged in a disinformation campaign against other countries, hence bringing accusations about their nuclear programs." He characterized the IAEA as the best agency for nuclear transfer to the developing sector, and called for an expansion of cooperation programs.

Neither nuclear energy nor oil, nor gas

Given the stamp of approval by the IAEA, there is little reason to doubt that Iran's nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes. But this is not, and never was, the issue. The issue is Iran's right to advanced technologies, the right of any nation in the developing sector, to industrialize.

This was obvious, in the most recent flap over Iran's cooperation deals in the field of gas. The news broke on Sept. 28, that a major deal had been signed, with Russian, Malaysian, and French companies. The \$2 billion deal involves the French Total, Russia's Gazprom, and Petronas of Malaysia. Total holds 40% of the shares, which means that this is the biggest deal signed with Iran since 1979. The other two partners hold 30% each. The consortium is to explore for natural

gas, and according to Iranian accounts, to extract 1,995 cubic feet of gas per day, from the Pars-e Jonubi field.

Immediately, irate voices were heard in Washington, to the effect that the agreement was in violation of the notorious Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), who presented the act, exclaimed that the French company should be "sanctioned to the fullest possible extent. There is no doubt," he ranted, "that Total has been trying to precipitate a dispute with this contract over the implementation of the act." The U.S. State Department's reaction was more directly political: "Our position on any investments in Iranian gas and oil fields is clear: Such investments make more resources available for Iran to use in supporting terrorism and pursuing missiles and nuclear weapons."

According to the legislation on sanctions, Clinton has 180 days to consider the situation, and decide whether sanctions should be imposed. Given the dimensions of the agreement, all three partners, Russia, France, and Malaysia, could be eligible for sanctions.

From initial indications, it appears as if the Clinton administration wants to avoid unnecessary confrontation. State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin stated on Sept. 29, that sanctions might be waived. He said, "The objective of the legislation is not to impose sanctions," but to get other countries, in Europe in particular, "to work with us on the subject of tightening up pressure on Iran." There are several indications of the administration's desire to improve relations with Iran, albeit in a step-by-step, very gradual process. The Clinton administration did make known on July 27, that it would not oppose a pipeline from Turkmenistan through Iran, to Turkey, when it could have used the sanctions legislation, to oppose it.

What threatens to blow up the situation, is the climate of frenzy which is being whipped up in Europe. Since the deal was announced, the press has gone overboard to paint a picture of a "war of words" between the old continent and the new. Those stoking the flames of conflict are being led by Leon Brittan, the British bully in the European Union who is urging "Europe" to seize the opportunity of the Iran deal, to "confront" the United States. That there is no need for confrontation, was noted by the German financial daily *Handelsblatt*, which pointed out that talks had already been scheduled for Oct. 15, for the United States and the EU to iron out any differences over trade issues. Why the French government, which backed the Total deal, went ahead with the announcement in the manner it did, notes *Handelsblatt*, is a big question mark. The thrust of the controversy, is to pit Europe and Russia against the United States.

President Clinton is facing a historic summit with China's President Jiang Zemin, and the challenge to forge a partnership with that great power in Asia. The current drumbeat against Iran, must be seen as part of the broader British effort to sabotage Clinton's policy toward Eurasia, and dealt with accordingly.

George Soros vs. sanity in Poland

by Anna Kaczor Wei

After a short election campaign that was interrupted by dramatic floods in southwest Poland, on Sept. 21 Polish citizens (only 48% of eligible voters) elected a new Sejm (parliament), now dominated by the Solidarity-led coalition called Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), which got 34% of the vote. The second largest party is the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), with 27% of vote, followed by the Freedom Union (UW), chaired by infamous free-marketeer Leszek Balcerowicz, 13%; the Polish Peasant Party (PSL), 7%; and the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP), chaired by former prime minister and nationalist Jan Olszewski, with more than 5%.

As of this writing, the AWS leadership is still in negotiations to form a coalition government. They will have to make a decision by Oct. 17, present their candidate for prime minister, who, after getting the approval of President Aleksander Kwasniewski, will form his cabinet. Many Polish sources confirm that the AWS is ready to form a coalition with the Freedom Union, with "the blessing" of the PSL and the ROP, to counterbalance the influence of the SLD, which they consider their main adversary because of its communist past. Such a coalition, however, will have at least one major flaw: It will be based on a conflict of interest, because the expectations of many Solidarity unionists are contrary to the economic ideas of the UW, whose leading politicians, including Balcerowicz, for many years have been collaborating with George Soros, the hit-man for the British financial oligarchy.

Soros's invasion of Poland

EIR readers are familiar with Soros's involvement in the destruction of the currencies and economies of many countries, most recently in Southeast Asia, where during the last few weeks, Malaysia's Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has attacked speculators like Soros in response to their destructive activities there.

Soros first set foot in Poland in the mid-1980s. In his book *Underwriting Democracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), Soros describes his first involvement in eastern Europe, including Poland, where he moved to establish one of his foundations in 1988: "Pelczynski was ready to negotiate with the government, and I had my own contacts with the Solidarity