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Obama Plans More Middle East Wars

By Stephen Lendman

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Cheerled by America's major media scoundrels, war looks increasingly likely. Syria and Iran both are targeted.

Imagine the potential catastrophic consequences, especially if nuclear weapons are used. They were before. Why not now. The prospect's chilling.

In his Der Ring des Nibelungen operas (the Ring), Richard Wagner portrayed his apocalyptic version musically. Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods) prophesied the end of the world.

Einstein suggested it, saying he didn't know what WW III weapons would be used, "but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."

Around the same time, Bertrand Russell warned:

"Shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce war" and live in peace. The stark choice is clear. The wrong one suggests consequences too grim to imagine.

It's terrifying to imagine nuclear bunker-buster bombs used against underground targets. Whatever the physical damage, irradiating vast areas could kill millions, and set a precedent to keep using them like king-sized hand grenades.

A 13,600-kilogram bunker-buster's being developed. Called "the massive ordnance penetrator," allegedly it can smash through 65 meters of reinforced concrete before detonating.

Defense Secretary Panetta said work on an array of military options are being considered if sanctions don't curb Iran's nuclear program. He added they've been underway "a long time," and Washington's "weighing all of the ramifications of how best to deal with Iran."

It's hard imagining the mindset of hawkish policy makers. Grave consequences aren't considered, let alone waging permanent wars against nonbelligerent countries threatening no one.

Yet Obama's fulfilling Dick Cheney's promise about wars not ending in our lifetime. Former CIA Director James Woolsey said America's "engaged in World War IV, and it could continue for years....This fourth world war, I think, will last considerably longer than either World Wars I or II did for us."

In his September 11, 1990 joint session of Congress speech, GHW Bush called it a "New World Order" ahead of Operation Desert Storm.

In its 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the Pentagon called it the "long war." It rages daily for unchallenged world dominance, no matter the potentially devastating consequences.

Obama Targets Syria

On March 7, Defense Secretary Panetta and Joint Chiefs head General Martin Demsey told the Senate Armed Service Committee that Pentagon officials were preparing war plans on Syria at Obama's request.

Last month, stopping barely short of declaring war, Obama condemned Assad, demanded he step down, and urged international intervention without saying how.

On February 24, The [New York Times](#) "Syria's Horrors" editorial called for "a strategy to end the killing," and said world leaders have to "try harder."

As a result, war seems more likely. Washington wants more international support. So far, Obama's shy about acting unilaterally. Syria's not Libya. In 2012, [Global Firepower.com](#) ranked its military strength 35th globally.

Its force strength numbers over 300,000 with 450,000 in reserve. It has thousands of tanks, artillery pieces, cruise and other sophisticated missiles, including S-300s able to "deflect a possible attack by NATO or the US and EU."

There's much more as well, including hundreds of ships and aircraft. In a showdown, most Syrians back Assad against Washington, other Western countries and Israel.

Global Firepower ranks Iran number 12. Its active military strength numbers 545,000 with 650,000 more in reserve. Its weapons arsenal is huge and sophisticated. Like Syrians, its people

back Ahmadinejad against foreign attack.

When externally threatened, most populations support their government. It's all they've got, especially against menacing forces, and they know it. Washington menaces humanity. Syrians and Iranians understand.

Earlier and now, Assad expressed willingness to negotiate to end violence. His overwhelmingly approved constitution offers hope for change. Washington, Britain, France, other rogue NATO partners, and regional despots want none of it.

On March 9, opposition Syrian Revolution General Commission (SRGC) representative Hadi Abdullah said:

"We reject any dialogue while tanks shell out towns, snipers shoot our women and children and many areas are cut off from the world without electricity, communications or water."

In fact, Western-backed killer gangs bear responsibility for months of violence. Western nations and regional allies supplied them with powerful weapons and training. US, UK and French intelligence and special forces operate covertly. In Homs, dozens of French soldiers were captured.

Assad's more victim than villain. Violence would stop today if Washington called off its dogs. Instead, it rages out-of-control. Assad's unfairly blamed. The world heads perilously toward more.

On March 9, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said:

"We cannot agree with the draft resolution in the form it is being presented in today. The text of the resolution under discussion is unbalanced."

"Its main problem is the absence of a simultaneous call on all sides to take practical steps in the context of ceasing fire."

Earlier Gatilov said:

"We continue complex consultations in NYC on the 'Syrian' resolution with the aim of reaching the text addressing equal demands for both parties."

"We will not agree with any UN Security Council resolution on Syria containing clues for use of force against the country. Ambiguities are unacceptable."

China's UN envoy Li Baodong said Beijing's "firmly opposed to the use of force to solve the Syrian problem and resolutely opposes pushing for forced regime change in Syria, as it violates the United Nations Charter and the basic norms guiding the practice of international relations."

Nonetheless, John McCain's call for bombing Syria may attract more Washington support for

direct intervention. He's the ranking Republican Armed Services Committee member. Last year, he was among the first in Congress for attacking Libya. It got traction. It may again followed by Iran.

New York Times Warmongering: Scoundrel Journalism 101

On March 5, its editorial headlined "[Iran, Israel and the United States](#)," saying:

"Iran's nuclear appetites are undeniable, as is its malign intent toward Israel, toward America, toward its Arab neighbors and its own people. Israel's threats of unilateral action have finally focused the world's attention on the danger."

Fact check

Iran threatens no one. Washington, Israel, its neighbors, and Times editors know it. They lied about Tehran's nonexistent threat and peaceful nuclear program. It complies fully with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) provisions. Washington long ago abandoned them. Nuclear armed and dangerous Israel ignores them.

Stopping short of urging war, Times editors legitimized Israel waging one unless Tehran proves a negative impossible for any nation. A decade ago, Saddam couldn't show nonexistent WMDs didn't exist. War followed.

Judith Miller played the lead role. Her daily feature front page Pentagon handouts smoothed the way for destroying the cradle of civilization. Are Syria and Iran next?

America's "newspaper of record" bears major responsibility for millions of post-9/11 lives lost. No matter, it urges more. It says neither Israel or Tehran should doubt Obama's resolve "to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon" it has no intention to develop.

Netanyahu: A Regional Menace

Haaretz took note several times, including in a [March 9 editorial](#) headlined, "Israel must not bind itself to Netanyahu's vulgar rhetoric on Iran," saying:

"Anyone who cares about Israel's future could not help but feel a chill upon hearing Benjamin Netanyahu's recent speech at the AIPAC conference - if not because of the gravity of the existential threat it described, then because of its sheer vulgarity and bad taste."

In fact, Israel faces no threat, existential or otherwise. Moreover, invoking the Holocaust and rhetorical gimmicks long ago wore thin. They don't wash but get repeated ad nauseam because media scoundrels regurgitate them.

Every Netanyahu speech gives them red meat to appear legitimate: "kitsch and death, threats and vows, warnings and rebukes of the entire world."

"The spine-chilling fear is that one day" we'll discover too late we've been had. It won't be the first time, but challenging two formidable adversaries may extract a price greater than Israel, the region and beyond can pay. At that point, it's too late.

Nonetheless, Netanyahu suggested attacking Iran's possible in months, saying:

"We're not standing with a stopwatch in hand. It's not a matter of days or weeks, but also not of years. The result must be removal of the threat of nuclear weapons in Iran's hands."

"I hope there won't be a war," he added, but strongly suggests Israel's ready to act jointly with Washington or alone.

In fact, claiming an Iran nuclear threat and blaming Assad for Western-generated violence are red herrings. At issue is replacing independent regimes with pro-Western ones, and for Israel removing regional rivals.

Don't expect America's "newspaper of record" or other major media scoundrels to explain. They march in lockstep cheerleading wars and their run-ups, no matter how much death, destruction and human misery they cause.

The best way to hold them accountable is tune them out. Without audience numbers they'll wither and die. Imagine being free of them. Hopefully it's just a matter of time.

A Final Comment

On March 8, the Atlantic magazine published an Iran War Clock. Set at 10 minutes to midnight, it said odds are even that Washington and/or Israel will attack. A so-called panel of experts was chosen to predict future risks.

They include a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Iran, a Council on Foreign Relations senior vice president, a Deputy Head of Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, Haaretz's military correspondent, an anti-Iranian front group head, and others like them.

Independent analysts were largely excluded. Names chosen include:

Daniel Byman, Shahram Chubin, Golnaz Esfandiari, Azar Gat, Jeffrey Goldberg, Amos Harel, Ephraim Kam, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Matthew Kroenig, John Limbert, Valerie Lincy, James Lindsay, Marc Lynch, Gary Milhollin, Trita Parsi, Paul Pillar, Barry Rubin, Karim Sadjadpour, Kenneth Timmerman, Shibley Telhami, Stephen Walt, and Robin Wright.

If no chance for war exists, the clock's set at 20 minutes to midnight. It moves closer by one minute increments for each added 5% risk. A 10% chance sets it at 18 minutes to midnight, five minutes before for 75%, and 10 minutes as now for 48%.

Claiming impartially, it calls its assessment a collective "gut-check feeling." In January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' Doomsday Clock moved to five minutes to midnight. It was its

first change since early 2010. In a statement it said at the time:

"Two years ago, it appeared that world leaders might address the truly global threats that we face. In many cases, that trend has not continued or been reversed."

Given all now ongoing, risks appear greater. Rely on reputable analysts to assess what's coming. Currently there's good cause for alarm.