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## THE IRAN WAR PATH HAS RESUMED: With Another ‘Colin Powell Moment’?

By Finian Cunningham

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*You know when Western powers are getting trigger happy towards Iran again because the mainstream media propaganda machine starts cranking out lurid scare stories.*

The latest wheeze is based on “computer-generated drawings” allegedly depicting a nuclear explosion blast chamber that Iran has allegedly been using to test mini nukes. The drawings were provided “exclusively” to the Associated Press news agency by an unnamed official from “a country tracking Iran's nuclear program, who said it proves [sic] the structure exists”.

Don’t you just love the way “unnamed sources” are quoted, who go on to “prove” their own unverifiable claims?

The AP story has since been picked up, predictably, by all and sundry Western media [1].

Not only are the stories illustrated with computerised images of the alleged blast chamber, there are also mathematical details of chamber dimensions, design and structure.

A good rule-of-thumb is that when western media and unnamed “diplomats” assiduously provide “details” on suspect installations, then it is a sure sign of desperation to convince the wider

public about otherwise dubious claims.

The template for this kind of disinformation stunt was the presentation by former US Secretary of State Colin Powell in February 2003 before the United Nations Security Council. Then, in a contrived performance that smacked of sheer theatre, Powell presented audio recordings and satellite images to testify that Saddam Hussein's Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. This was a piece with then British Prime Minister Tony Blair's hysterical assertion that Iraq had the capability of launching such weapons "within 45 seconds".

In sonorous tones, Powell declared to the world: "My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we're giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence."

All of the supposed "solid sources" claimed by Powell (and Blair and George W Bush) were later shown to be fabrications or spurious. Powell for one lied through his teeth. But based on his performance, the US and Britain launched a nine-year war of aggression on Iraq that claimed over one million lives and bequeathed that country with a heinous legacy of ongoing internecine violence, poverty, destruction and widespread cancer-causing depleted-uranium contamination.

Incredibly, far from being shamed over committing war crimes and being complicit in war crimes, Western governments and media continue to repeat the same cynical charade of weapons of mass destruction on Iran.

Less than three years after Colin Powell's disgraceful moment of mendacity before the eyes of the world, the New York Times ran a story alleging that Iran had nuclear warheads. The claim was based on images obtained by unnamed American intelligence officials allegedly from a stolen Iranian laptop. That story was later exposed by investigative journalist Gareth Porter to be a ludicrous fabrication because the images were actually of redundant North Korean missiles.

It is with this kind of track record of war crimes and blatant fabrication that the latest "exclusive" story of a secret Iranian nuclear blast chamber must be assessed – a story based on computer drawings supplied yet again by ubiquitous unnamed sources. Debunking such disinformation is not enough. Given the seriousness of consequences from publishing this disinformation, Iran or some international citizen body should be filing a legal case against Western mainstream media for inciting illegal wars.

It should be noted that the latest nuclear allegation against Iran comes only days ahead of the second round of the P5 + 1 negotiations set to take place on 23 May in Baghdad. Ominously, it is being mooted in the Western media that if Iran does not make a major concession, that is stop its legally entitled civilian nuclear energy programme (a highly unlikely concession), then the Western powers or their Israeli subcontractor of terror will move to a military option. In this context, of concern is the recent build-up of military forces by the US and its proxy autocratic monarchy states in the Persian Gulf.

The move this week by Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states to form a closer military union – citing Iran as a regional threat – can be seen as an American closing of ranks in advance of a

possible attack.

The dissemination by Western media of “evidence” of Iranian nuclear weaponisation takes on an even more sinister purpose, with shadows of the “Colin Powell moment”.