

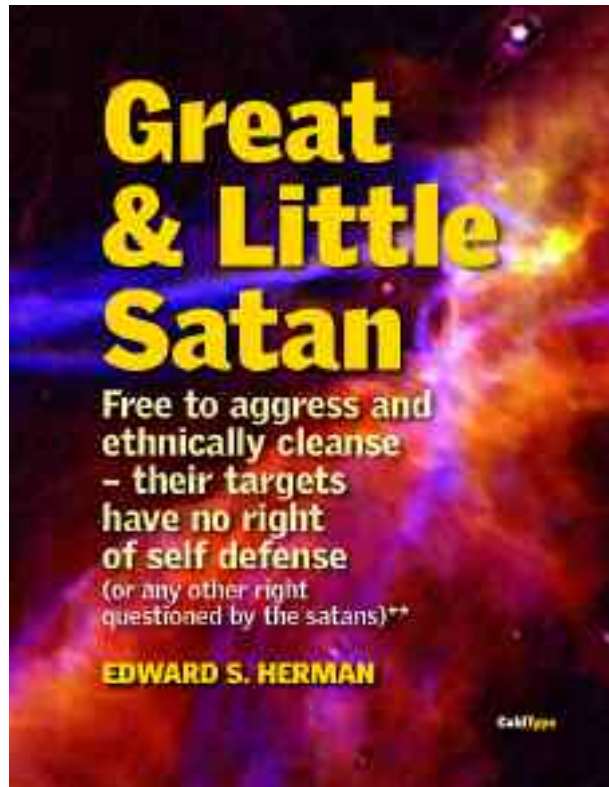


Great & Little Satan

Free to aggress and
ethnically cleanse
– their targets
have no right
of self defense
(or any other right
questioned by the satans)*

EDWARD S. HERMAN

ColdType



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In the discussions about Iran among the leaders in the “international community,” their expressed dire fears about Iran and its nuclear program never cause them to raise any questions about Israel’s nuclear program, even though it is well known that Israel not only has a “program” but has several hundred nuclear weapons, built in secret but with U.S., French, and British aid, and of course done outside the authority of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) designed to prevent proliferation. Israel’s acquisition of this arsenal is obviously disturbing to its Arab neighbors, who are placed at a great military disadvantage by this violation of NPT principles – and equity – accepted and even facilitated by Israel’s Western allies. To see those Western allies greatly agitated over the possibility that Iran might have a nuclear program that at some future date would allow it to produce such weapons, while taking Israel’s arsenal as a given not even worthy of mention, reflects a gross political double standard that is both racist and illustrative of that famous “clash of civilizations,” with the clash coming from Western initiatives, actions and threats.

Gates and the Iranian Versus Israeli Threat

While this double standard is not even discussible in the Western mainstream it is considered a major issue and is debated in the Arab world. Thus, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates was confronted with the double standard at a conference in Bahrain organized by the London-based International Institute for Strategic

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

Studies, where Gates was urging the Arab states to press Iran to halt any nuclear activities. Gates was asked by Bahraini Minister of Labor Majeed al-Alawi whether Gates thought “the Zionist (Israeli) nuclear weapon is a threat to the region.” Gates paused, and answered tersely: “No, I do not.” A.P. reports that “Asked if U.S. acceptance of that was a double standard in light of Washington’s pressure on Iran, Gates again said ‘no,’ and described the government in Jerusalem as more responsible than the one in Tehran. ‘I think Israel is not training terrorists to subvert its neighbors. It has not shipped weapons into a place like Iraq to kill thousands of innocent civilians covertly,’ said Gates. ‘So I think that there are significant differences in terms of both the history and the behavior of the Iranian and Israeli governments.’”^[1] This reportedly elicited a great deal of laughter among the Arab representatives present, but both the laughter and the issue at stake are outside the orbit of accepted thought in the West.

Gates’s response is a mixture of ideology, lies, and evasion of information relevant to evaluating Israel’s role and nuclear program. Even if Gates was correct in these claims he fails to address the fact that Israel’s acquisition of nuclear weapons was a major violation of non-proliferation principles, and the inequality that it represents threatens other Arab states, apart from Iran. What is “responsible”? Is it responsible to invade one’s neighbors in violation of the UN Charter, as Israel has done repeatedly in Lebanon? Was dropping a million cluster bombs on the Lebanon countryside in the last few days before the end of the 2006 war “responsible” behavior? Is systematically violating the Fourth Geneva Convention on the behavior of an occupying power and ignoring the International Court decision on the illegality of the apartheid wall responsible?^[2] Is starving and denying medical aid to the civilian population of Gaza responsible? (The International Red Cross reports that “The Palestinian Territories face a deep human crisis, where millions of people are denied their human dignity. Not once in a while, but every day.”^[3] Isn’t training an army to attack one’s neighbors in violation of the UN Charter even worse than “training terrorists to subvert its neighbors?” Wasn’t Israel’s organization and support of a South Lebanese Army in Lebanon for many years a support of cross-border terrorism? Given the regular Israeli invasions of Lebanon, isn’t any Iranian support of Hezbollah support of a resistance against aggression and state terrorism? Isn’t the U.S. provision of arms to Israel support of both state terrorism and massive ethnic cleansing? Hasn’t the United States

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

shipped weapons to Iraq that have been used to kill far more civilians than can possibly be attributed to Iran? Did the United States or Iran destroy Falluja?

The point is that Gates is speaking for an aggressor nation that has attacked three countries in the last decade, not in self defense, but in acts of aggression clearly violating the UN Charter and constituting the “supreme international crime.” Little Satan is the partner-in-crime of the Great Satan, who protects it from any constraint on its crimes and allows it to violate international law, ignore International Court and UN rulings, and ethnically cleanse Palestinians, with complete impunity. Gates’s answer on Israel’s “responsibility” is laughable nonsense but is not even discussible in the brainwashed and cowed West. The Satans rule and their leaders can get away with anything, because in Great Satan’s sphere of influence it is taken as a premise by leaders and elites that the Satans are good and/or must be accommodated and that their targets are – or must be taken as – genuine threats. Great Satan may have lied egregiously in justifying his last major invasion (Iraq), and he may have killed a million civilians and destroyed that target, but as he pushes for attacking his next victim the international community rushes to Satan’s aid, to prevent that target from exercising its rights under the NPT that Satan says it should not have! Satan’s aggressions and interventions may have destabilized the Middle East, with the help and collaboration of Little Satan, but he can accuse Iran of destabilizing the area, and this becomes the working “truth” in the U.S. media and international community.

After the United States overthrew the democratic government of Iran by a coup in 1953 and installed the Shah of Iran, it then supported and helped refine a police state that was notorious for its torture chambers. But this regime was “responsible” enough for the United States to actually urge it to go nuclear, and the United States and its allies (and their private firms supplying nuclear materials) jumped in to help, never bothered by the Shah’s 1974 claim that he would be producing nuclear weapons “without a doubt and sooner than the world thinks.”^[4] The successor Islamic-dominated state posed no threat to U.S. “national security,” but it did displace a puppet regime that helped the United States police its Middle East sphere of influence. It was certainly not more repressive than the Shah’s Iran, nor did it intervene beyond its borders more than did the Shah’s regime. But it was not a U.S. client and it was not in U.S. service – hence it became by political definition “irresponsible,” and the United States and the “responsible” Israel both

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

encouraged and supported the (at-that-time) “responsible” Saddam Hussein to attack Iran in the 1980s in a bloody war of attrition.

The non-client Iran has been a U.S. target essentially since the 1979 ouster of the Shah and takeover by Ayatollah Khomeini and his associates, with “regime change” the oft-admitted objective. During the last half dozen years the Iran leadership has tried on several occasions to reach an accord with the United States, but each effort has been rejected, usually by a simple refusal to respond to Iranian overtures. ^[5] Iran did suspend its uranium enrichment program in an agreement with the EU-3 (Britain, France, and Germany) on October 21, 2003, and on December 18, 2003 signed an Additional Protocol with the IAEA allowing even more intensive inspections. What Iran received in return was their promise (not Washington’s) to provide some unreported security assurances. But with the United States refusing to provide any such assurances or to make any concessions to Iran, putting ever more pressure on the IAEA to search for Iran violations, and threatening a military attack, Iran returned to its enrichment program in early 2006. At that point, the United States became “reasonable” and expressed a willingness to negotiate, but only on condition that Iran once again suspends enrichment. The United States insists on suspension first, talks later, at which Iran now balks given the unremitting U.S. hostility and the unreasonableness of asking Iran to abandon a major bargaining chip before the problematic bargaining.

It should be understood that under the NPT, Iran has the legal right to research and develop nuclear energy for peaceful (i.e., non-military) purposes. But the United States opposes this, allegedly on the grounds that it is a step toward nuclear weapons. I am not alone in believing that the United States is using this gambit, in which Iran would have to prove a negative, not out of any fear of an Iranian nuclear arsenal but to clear the ground for war. In order to get the international community to go along with its demand for action against Iran, and justification for a military attack, the United States has long claimed that Iran is definitely seeking nuclear arms. Although this is a claim by a country that has lied as a matter of course on such issues, and IAEA inspections have never uncovered any proof, the United States has been able to mobilize the IAEA and Security Council to focus on the Iran “threat” and impose sanctions on Iran. The fact that the United States played this same game, based on fabricated claims, in the run-up to the Iraq invasion, doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter that Iran has submitted itself

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

to numerous and uniquely intensive IAEA inspections that have never found any evidence of weapons intent. It doesn't matter that both the United States and Israel are threatening to attack Iran, itself a violation of the UN Charter, and that both have committed acts of aggression in the Middle East and continue massive law violations in Palestine as well as Iraq.

Israeli analyst Martin Van Creveld has said that, given that Israel and the United States both have nuclear weapons and both are threatening Iran, Iran's leaders would be "crazy" not to seek nuclear arms as a matter of self defense. Van Creveld doesn't understand. Only the Great Satan and his clients have a "security" problem and a right to take action to protect that security (including the right of preemptive attack on an alleged threatening adversary). The world is very conscious of the fact that a big concern at the recent Annapolis Conference was Israel's "security," but no mention was made there of Palestinian security. Similarly, Iran's threat to Israel is a widespread concern, mentioned recently by French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and covered extensively in the Western mainstream media, but that the nuclear-armed Israel poses a threat to Iran and that Iran has a right to defend itself against such a threat is off the Western agenda. Once declared targets by the Great Satan or one of its clients, countries like Iran have no right of self-defense. In Iran's case, Satan has ruled, and the world's leaders and elites therefore genuflect and denounce the new target and victim.

The NIE blow to the hawks

Satan's accusations and its buildup to a war with Iran have taken a surprising hit with the recent disclosure of an NIE report that claims that Iran has not had an operative nuclear weapons program since 2003. ^[6] The report asserts that Iran's nuclear weapons program was halted in the fall of 2003, and that its uranium conversion and enrichment activities were "voluntarily suspended" in October 2003. These activities were begun again in early 2006, but the NIE report states "with moderate confidence that Tehran has not restarted its nuclear weapons program as of mid-2007," and "with high confidence that Iran will not be technically capable of producing and reprocessing enough plutonium for a weapon before about 2015." It even says that "This NIE does not assume that Iran intends to acquire nuclear weapons." As former CIA analyst Ray McGovern points out, "This, of

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

course, pulls out the rug from under Cheney's claim of a 'fairly robust new nuclear program' in Iran, and President Bush's inaccurate assertion that Iranian leaders have even admitted they are developing nuclear weapons. Apparently, intelligence community analysts are no longer required to produce the faith-based intelligence that brought us the Oct. 1, 2002 NIE 'Iraq's Continuing Program for Weapons of Mass Destruction'-the worst in the history of U.S. intelligence." [7] The claim of an imminent threat has thus collapsed, and the hawks are given solace only by the NIE claim that Iran had an active nuclear weapons program prior to its suspension in 2003. This claim, vigorously denied by the Iranians, is apparently based on alleged intercepted Iranian phone messages and the testimony of an Iranian defector. [8] It calls for caution. Such evidence in the pre-Iraq war buildup turned out to be selective, forged, and in the case of defectors, fabricated (recall Curveball, the Iraq defector who brought the good news of Saddam's WMD); and it flies in the face of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's issuance of a religious ruling in 2003 (a Fatwah) stating that Islam forbids the building or stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Reese Erlich says that "Before dismissing such a ruling as propaganda, it's worth noting that similar religious reasoning stopped Iran from using chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War, despite Saddam Hussein's numerous chemical assaults against Iranian troops and civilians." [9]

Doesn't the fact that Iran's uranium conversion and enrichment program was carried out covertly in the earlier years make a weapons project likely? Not necessarily, because Iran knew that the United States would object strenuously even to a non-weapons oriented program, as it has been doing with Iran's program that has been out in the open for several years. How easy it is to make that covert action a sinister proof of a weapons program, that of course is not sinister if the United States, Israel or Pakistan do it!

The current NIE shocker can be explained by the fact that the intelligence community resents the extent to which the Bush administration has twisted arms and fixed evidence in the process of making it conformable to predetermined policy, with the intelligence community discredited for having allowed itself to be coerced into supporting disinformation on Iraq. The NIE authors are also bolstered by the fact that significant numbers of powerful military personnel are against going to war with Iran, including Admiral William Fallon, the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East. The authors have therefore put up a fight for minimal truth, and although their findings were evidently delayed many months

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

by opposition from the Cheney-Bush war faction, they could not be stopped, partly because some of them were clearly prepared to go public even at the cost of job loss.

The rightwing and neocons are fighting back furiously, and are strongly supported by Israel, whose leaders have been trying as hard as they can to get the United States into a war with Iran. They and their political agents and allies, including Democrats like Jane Harman,^[10] have been calling into question the NIE findings, some denouncing these as “guesswork,” others claiming the NIE authors had fallen for clever Iranian disinformation, still others like John Bolton suggesting politicization and traitorous subversion of government policy – a “quasi-putsch”! Sixteen intelligence agencies in an anti-Bush conspiracy to misread evidence! Of course Bush and many other rightwingers have claimed that insofar as Iran has stopped its program, that is because of the U.S. pressure and threats, which need to be maintained or intensified to keep this sinister threat at bay. Regime change is still needed because this evil regime has the capacity to build a nuclear weapon, so that the dire threat can only be removed by replacing the existing government with some “responsible” one like the former Shah, or a Musharraf, or a Bush-Cheney look-alike.

The probability of an attack on Iran has definitely not fallen to zero. The Israelis want it badly and this feeds into the positions of the Democratic Party leadership, which grovels before the pro-Israel lobby, with the Democrat-supported Kyle-Lieberman resolution in the Senate virtually giving Bush a blank check to attack. Furthermore, the demonization process has been furious and, as usual, effective, with the alleged Iranian “support of terrorism,” illicit intervention in the Iraq war, alleged threats to “wipe out Israel,” and sinister foot-dragging in reference to its nuclear program, continuously thrust before the public, with a consequent increasing public willingness to stop the New Hitler. With France and Germany now more closely aligned with the United States on sanctions, that line of pressure and buildup to attack and further demonization is not unlikely.

Meanwhile, the Great Satan is free to escalate in Iraq, continue to threaten Iran, chide and bully China, Russia and Venezuela, and push ahead on its own nuclear weapons upgrading program; and little Satan can threaten to attack Iran, reinvade Gaza, and continue its ethnic cleansing in Palestine and East Jerusalem, its own nuclear arsenal safe from criticism by the international community. The rule stays in place: what the Great Satan wants is treated with deference, and what

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

the Little Satan does is nobody else's business. The new NIE report is a real setback for the leaders of the two Satans, but they are still in charge and they have overcome serious obstacles before.

Endnotes

**It appears that the United States was first designated the "Great Satan" by Ayatollah Khomeini in early November 1979, shortly after the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Usage of the phrase was based in large part on the U.S. role in overthrowing the democratic government of Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953 and installing and steadily supporting the Shah dictatorship from 1953 to the Shah's forced departure in early 1979, and then protecting him and giving him refuge in his flight. The first two certainly were nasty actions, and the U.S. record of ugly behavior is immense: in his latest Anti-Empire Report (Dec. 11, 2007) William Blum lists, among other U.S. efforts since World War II, (1) attempting to overthrow more than 50 foreign governments, most of which were democratically elected; (2) attempting to assassinate more than 50 foreign leaders, and (3) dropping bombs on the people of some 30 countries. Little Satan has also compiled an impressive record of international law and human rights violations in the course of running a racist state and engaging in relentless ethnic cleansing of non-Jews in Palestine. Satanic is defensible rhetoric in describing these partners.

1. "Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Manama, Bahrain," U.S. Department of Defense, December 8, 2007

<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1201>

2. Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, International Court of Justice (Advisory Opinion), July 9, 2004 –

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3. Dignity Denied in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, International Committee of the Red Cross, November, 2007

[http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/palestine-report-131207/\\$FILE/0941_002_Dignity_Denied_OT_Palestine.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/palestine-report-131207/$FILE/0941_002_Dignity_Denied_OT_Palestine.pdf)

EDWARD S.HERMAN | GREAT AND LITTLE SATAN

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5. For illustrations, see John Richardson, “The Secret History of Impending War,” Esquire, Oct. 10, 2007.
6. Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities, U.S. National Intelligence Council, November, 2007 – http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20071203_release.pdf
- 7: Ray McGovern, “No Nuke Iran,” CounterPunch, December 4, 2007
<http://www.counterpunch.com/mcgovern12042007.html>
8. See, e.g., Greg Miller, “CIA has recruited Iranians to defect,” Los Angeles Times, December 9, 2007.
9. Erlich, op. cit.
10. Peter Hoekstra and Jane Harman, “The Limits of Intelligence,” Wall Street Journal, Dec. 10, 2007
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