



# US war drums increase tempo

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The US has stepped up its threats of a military strike on Iran. It is using Iran's development of nuclear power and accusations that its Revolutionary Guards are aiding the Iraqi resistance as a pretext.

The US Senate recently declared the Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organisation but so far the US government has been unable to back up these allegation with anything beyond finding Iranian made weapons . Major-General Rick Lynch has said that Iraqi militias were "trained in Iran and they're conducting operations in our battle space. They're Iraqis but they're [Iranian] surrogates and they're still out there."

This takes place against the background of US sanctions against Iran. It is now illegal for US companies to have any economic relationship with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp, which controls a large business empire in Iran.

The main thrust of the propaganda machine has been the argument that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is trying to develop nuclear weapons. Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which forbids the making of super-enriched uranium for nuclear bombs. Countries that have refused to sign the treaty and continue developing nuclear weapons include US allies, India and Pakistan, but it is Iran that the US threatens to bomb.

Under the NPT, Iran is perfectly within its rights to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes, and yet the US is demanding that it cease this activity. The United Nations Security Council has already passed two resolutions against Iran's nuclear activity - in March 2007 and November 2006 - and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has sent inspectors to Iran to check that it is complying with the NPT.

The IAEA report released this month said that its inspectors had been satisfied that the power stations will not be used to make nuclear weapons. More recently the US government's own National Intelligence Estimate states that it now believes with "high confidence" that Iran stopped its weapons programme in 2003. This has thrown the US hawks into confusion but Bush has said: "Iran was dangerous, Iran is dangerous and Iran will be dangerous if they have the know-how to make a nuclear weapon."

The US is pushing for a third round of UN sanctions on Iran. It is attempting to cripple the Iranian economy, while drumming up media support for war. So far it has the support of all the countries on the Security Council except for China and Russia.

The US wants control of the Middle East and its oil wealth. It is losing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and its whole strategy for the region is in jeopardy. Iran has become the only strong state in the region obstructing US plans. That is why Washington and its nuclear-armed ally, Israel, is ready and willing to take part in air strikes, not only on Iran but possibly on Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon, too.

The international anti-war movement must be ready to mobilise on the scale it did in the months before the invasion of Iraq in 2003. It must clearly declare that it will defend Iran against attack, however repulsive its anti-worker and anti-democratic regime. The last year of the Bush-Cheney presidency sees the Neocons weakened by their failures, but none the less vicious for that. We have to be on our guard.

