

COUNTERPUNCH

It's Israel, Stupid!

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The second US war on Iran in less than a year has raised a burning question in popular media: What is the rationale for the war and why is it changing? Is it because negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program were not progressing? Is it because Iran was close to developing nuclear weapons? Is it because Iranian ballistic missiles were going to reach the US soon? Is it because Israel was going to attack Iran and the US took pre-emptive measures to ensure the safety of Americans? Is it because the Iranian government was violating human rights? Or is it something else? The press in the US has not been able to make sense of this changing justification. But this is curious. Was the media asleep over the past few decades?

A quarter of a century ago, I delivered a presentation on US foreign policy towards Iran at an economics conference. My presentation concluded by stating that US policy in the Persian Gulf region had been a series of "regrettably shortsighted policies," borrowing a phrase from former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. I argued that these policies had served to prolong the life of the theocratic government in Iran. I believed that without the constant threat of foreign enemies, this government would have had no one to blame for its social and economic problems but itself.

In my paper, I outlined how Israel and its lobbying groups in the US were the primary architects of US policy. I explained how they had developed three justifications, or "sins" as I referred to them, to justify punishing Iran:

- 1) the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,
- 2) support for "terrorism," and
- 3) opposition to the Oslo "peace process" between Israel and the Palestinians.

However, I contended that Israel's true objective had always been to overthrow the Islamic Republic, a goal now commonly known as a "regime change." The rationale behind this objective was that Iran and Iraq were the only two countries in the Middle East that posed a barrier to the creation of Greater Israel (Eretz Yisrael), which was intended to encompass the West Bank, Gaza, and potentially more.

The conference paper was published as an article in an economics journal and, later expanded into a two-volume book. In the book I discussed the original three sins and noted that Iran's opposition to the Oslo peace process was eventually abandoned as Israel itself moved away from the process. However, over time more sins were added to the remaining two. I referred to it as a "menu option" for overthrowing the Iranian government. For instance, the neocons in the George W. Bush Administration expanded the menu to include accusation of Iran destabilizing Afghanistan, harbouring Al-Qaeda, lacking democracy, being ruled by unelected individuals, violating human rights, not protecting the rights of women, not being forward-looking and modern, etc.

I also argued that the neocons had used a menu option to attack Iraq as well, even though Israel was pushing them to attack Iran instead. But they could not get Bush, an intellectually challenged president, to go along and bomb Iran. Afterall, before attacking Iraq Bush had visions of talking to God.

As I have written in my academic works, and in CounterPunch, Netanyahu, Israel's chief devil incarnate and the butcher of Gaza, did not take no for an answer and kept pushing every US administration to attack Iran. He had no success, until a deranged man, surrounded by conduits for Israel, including his son-in-law and a real estate friend, took control of the US government.

A man who to this day, cannot even pronounce the name of the Iranian general he ordered to be assassinated in 2020, or the name of the “supreme leader” of Iran whom he helped to be murdered in 2026, finally did what Netanyahu wanted to be done: attack Iran on behalf of Israel. The first attack, as I wrote in my July 2025 essay for this journal, did not accomplish Netanyahu’s goal of a “regime change” and restoration of monarchy in Iran. So, Netanyahu kept up the pressure. He visited the White House multiple times since July 2025 to plan death and destruction in Iran.

By now, as many astute observers have noticed, the goal post had shifted to include not only “regime change” but the disintegration of Iran, something that Israel had toyed with previously, as I had argued in my works. Separating Kurdistan, and possibly Baluchistan, Azerbaijan, Khuzestan, etc., from Iran would ensure that there would be no country in the region that could spoil the dream of Greater Israel.

The madman in the White House, as well as his CIA, soon followed the advice of the Israeli butcher and scrambled to foment an uprising in Kurdistan, a cruel game that has been played on Kurds many times before, including in Iraq and Syria. But this time, the Kurds did not fall into the Israel-US trap, and the idea appears to have been scrapped. So, for now, the madman in the White House and his blood thirsty friend in Jerusalem continue to kill and destroy everything in sight in Iran. What comes next, as this essay is being written, is beyond prediction. When madmen are on the loose, anything can happen.

So, if you don’t already know, the US attacked Iran for one reason and one reason only: Israel. Israel, that Frankenstein monster created by the US and Europeans, has been urging the US for decades to wage a destructive war against Iran. The Israelis have finally achieved their desired outcome. If you think this is an exaggeration, just listen to Netanyahu one day after the second attack on Iran:

We are in a campaign in which we are bringing the full strength of the IDF to the battle, as never before, in order to ensure our existence and our future. But we are also bringing to this campaign the assistance of the United States, my friend, US President Donald Trump, and the US military. This coalition of forces allows us to do what *I have yearned to do for 40 years*: smite the terror regime hip and thigh. This is what I promised – and this is what we shall do. (Statement by PM Netanyahu – 1 March 2026)

All the other justifications that have been given are pure nonsense. Iran does not have a nuclear weapon and does not even have a plan to develop one. According to the US’s own intelligence community, Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003. In recent years they enriched uranium to nearly 60 percent as a bargaining chip to remove stifling sanctions that had been imposed on the country for more than four decades by the US and its European partners. They tried repeatedly to reach an agreement with the US to limit the level of enrichment and dilute their highly enriched uranium in exchange for sanctions relief, but to no avail. Iran also does not

have ballistic missiles that can reach the United States. Iranian missiles can at best reach Southern Europe.

Thus, Iran does not pose a threat to the US with either nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles.

Yes, the Islamic republic is brutal when it comes to dissent. But the most brutal force and the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is Israel, and the US is not far behind. It is hard to believe that these forces would ever worry about dissidents in Iran. Afterall, the US and Israel had no objection to the violation of human rights by the Shah's regime prior to the 1979 revolution.

I concluded my presentation in 2001 by stating that the US's "regrettably shortsighted policies" were only serving to prolong the life of the theocratic government in Iran. It appears that after a quarter of a century, we have moved beyond shortsighted policies into the realm of insane and criminal policies. Regardless of how one labels the US policies, the outcome has been to ensure the longevity of the theocracy in Iran. Consider this: an 86-year-old "supreme leader" was succeeded by his 56-year-old son, a scenario that would have been unlikely without the actions of the madmen in Washington and Jerusalem!

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