

***On the Need to Re-Establish Sensible Diplomatic Relations
Between Canada and the Islamic Republic of Iran***

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The state of formal relations between the governments of Canada and the Islamic Republic of Iran are abysmal. Just days ago Stephen Harper implicitly urged on an internal uprising within Iran. In a speech in Vancouver he ushered in Nowruz, the Persian New Year, by conveying the view that Iran's current government rules through "tyranny and oppression."

In September of 2012 the Harper government unilaterally terminated Canada's embassy in Tehran while simultaneously expelling Iranian diplomats from Ottawa. "Canada views the Government of Iran as the most significant threat to global peace and security in the world today," declared Harper's Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird.

In my view the Harper government's characterization of both the domestic condition and the international orientation of Iran is grossly inaccurate. Our

own foreign policy towards Iran is ill considered and inconsistent with Canada's genuine national interests, but especially our economic, cultural and geopolitical interests.

The heartland of the ancient civilization of Persia, Iran is a resource-rich country at the cross-roads of Eurasia. Poised between the Persian Gulf in the south and the Caspian Sea in the north, Iran is home to a diverse population of almost 80,000,000 people. Last autumn I was invited to Iran's capital, Tehran, as a delegate to a New Horizon International Conference of Independent Thinkers and Film Makers.

In Tehran I enjoyed stimulating, wide ranging and free flowing intellectual discourse with a distinguished group of colleagues primarily from throughout Europe, North America, and the Middle East. The host of the conference, Nader Talebzadeh, is a renowned journalist and filmmaker who regularly hosts on TV one of Iran's most popular public affairs shows.

I was invited to appear on Mr. Talebzadeh's show that included simultaneous translation into Farsi, Persia's main language. The proceedings of the New Horizon conference were intensively and extensively covered by the Iranian news media. One of my assignments was to interpret recent developments in Canada for Iranian audiences.

Since my visit to Iran the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, created a significant political and constitutional crisis in the United States by addressing Congress without the approval of the US President Barak Obama. Netanyahu's aim was to cut off the possibility of a deal on Iran's nuclear

energy program between the governments of Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

These negotiations are tied to what I would describe as an elaborate scheme of economic warfare designed to hurt the people and government of Iran.

The preferred scenario here is obvious. This economic pain is being inflicted to intervene in the internal sovereignty of the Iranian.

As Stephen Harper's recent Nowruz speech in Vancouver helps clarify, the preferred agenda here is that the foreign imposition of so-called sanctions will help induce a significant portion of the Iranian people to rise up against their own system of government. Under the existing conditions in the region this tactic of regime change is reprehensible. Unlike Canada's ally and arms customer Saudi Arabia, Iran is the site of frequent elections that do result in significant alterations in the public policies of the Iranian government.

As long as the Canadian government continues as a protagonist in this economic warfare, many Canadian enterprises that are anxious to conduct business with their Iranian counterparts will continue to be hampered.

Government interventions in the imperatives of free trade will continue to deprive Canadian companies of a secure legal framework to interact commercially with a relatively stable, resource rich and technologically sophisticated country, one whose well educated population includes a very high proportion of university-educated women.

There is little doubt that Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper is following a line in his conduct of Canadian foreign policy that is consistent with that of his neoconservative colleagues and mentors in the US

Republican Party. Indeed, since Stephen Harper delivered his notorious speech to the Israeli Knesset in early 2014 the government of Canada has outdone the government of the United States in subordinating its national interest to the political agenda of Likudnik-dominated Israel. I shall develop these contentions in the remainder of my presentation.

David Frum, George Bush, Alberta Report
and the Axis of Evil Speech

I want to continue this analysis with a twist that combines the local history of Alberta with one of the most consequential speeches ever given in the US Congress. In January of 2002 US President George W. Bush responded in his State of the Union address to the debacle of September 11, 2001. The address would come to be known as the Axis of Evil speech.

In broadening the framework of what had already been christened as the Global War on Terror, Bush included Iran on a list of state culprits along with Iraq and North Korea. The US president accused the Iranian government of “exporting terror while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom.” As we shall see, this inflammatory characterization of Iran in the Axis of Evil speech would become embedded in Canadian foreign policy once the Conservative Party of Prime Minister Stephen Harper achieved a majority government in 2011.

David Frum provides a primary link between the politics of Alberta and this important episode in US and world history. Son of well-known CBC broadcaster Barbara Frum, David Frum had a big part in the authorship of

the Axis of Evil speech including its defining phrase. Ted Byfield mentored Frum on his way in the mid-1980s from the University of Toronto to Harvard Law School. The legendary founder and publisher of *Alberta Report*, Byfield gave Frum the opening to take part in the work of an important hatchery right-wing journalism. The feisty *Alberta Report* helped energize Preston Manning's Reform Party, the political launching pad for the current prime minister of Canada and one of Frum's fellow neocon travellers.

David Frum appreciated the unabashed Christian conservatism of both Bush and Byfield. In a forward to his mentor's book, Frum celebrated Byfield's "almost reckless courage... to defend religion" even as he later savoured how the phrase, "Axis of Evil," seemed to fit George Bush's evangelical way of thinking and talking. Frum described the immortalized phrase as "theological... the sort of language President Bush used."

As a leading proponent, protagonist, and Israel First propagandist for the ongoing Global War on Terror, David Frum continued the religious terminology he helped introduce in the Axis of Evil speech. In 2003 he co-authored with Richard Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*. Published in 2003, the book gave more explicit form and detail to the pre-9/11 geopolitical agenda introduced in 2000 by the future war cabinet of then-presidential candidate George W. Bush. Perle had been prominent among those Israel First war hawks who joined together as the Project for the New American Century in their bid to win and then dominate a Republican Party White House.

The number one item in the Frum-Perle bullet points that they claim would put *An End to Evil* called on government to “**Support the overthrow of the terrorist mullahs of Iran.**” This type of provocation from a source that praised the role of Christianity in the politics of Bush and Byfield in very telling. Both the Axis of Evil speech of the *End to Evil* book deal in copious quantities of innuendo rather than evidence to connect the three targeted polities to the alleged culprits of 9/11.

While there is a paucity of proof on the one side there is ample evidence to demonstrate that the US and Saudi governments were major sources of funding, arms and political support for al-Qaeda, the mujahedeen and the Taliban in the prelude to 9/11. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the tight network of business relations between the Bush and bin Laden families was a major factor the politics of pipelines, illicit drugs and war profiteering in both the prelude to and the outcome of 9/11.

University professors, mainstream media commentators and political spin doctors like David Frum have tended to obfuscate rather than illuminate the Cold War background of the Global War on Terror. The transformation of the apparatus of anti-communism into the apparatus of anti-terrorism created the major basis of President Bush’s two-term presidency even as Prime Minister Stephen Harper is presently deploying a similar strategy in his bid for a second majority government.

The Cold War and the Seemingly
Never Ending Global War on Terror

Because of the atheistic character of Marxist interpretations of history's central dynamic, those on the US-led side of the Cold War supported the proponents of theocratic agendas of many sorts. This anti-communist, anti-secular strategy was deployed especially actively in societies with large Muslim populations. The CIA, for instance, helped to build up the Muslim Brotherhood in response to the allure of Egyptian President Abdul Nasser's vision of socialistic pan-Arabism.

In the late 1980s the government of Israel joined with that of the United States in helping to cultivate the Islamic force of Hamas, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, to counter the influence of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization. In Afghanistan the more secular government of Dr. Mohammad Najibullah was opposed and eventually overthrown in 1992 by a multinational Islamic proxy army organized, armed and financed through the CIA, the Pakistani ISI and Saudi co-conspirators including Osama bin Laden.

Our governments' siding with theocrats over those on the more secular side of the equation outlasted the War on Communism to prevail in the NATO-back overthrow with Canadian assistance of Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi. This same pattern continues in the attempt to unseat the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. All of this history is kept more or less hidden from public view. Instead the public has been fed a steady diet of disinformation presenting the rise of Islamic jihad following the Cold War as a phenomenon independent of Western involvement and backing, a phenomenon exclusively driven by an irrational hatred of Western civilization.

This pattern of deception continues so that neither our parliamentarians nor our mainstream media ask even the most basic questions concerning the sources of ISIL's funding, its weaponry and its training. What, if any, non-Muslim interests are being served or might be served by ISIL's very theatrical displays of what can only be described as outlandish fanaticism? Who benefits and who loses?

The prevailing pattern of deception is very consistent with the deafening conspiracy of silence concerning recent reports that a CSIS-connected agent of the Canadian deep state was arrested in Turkey because he allegedly helped identify, transport and ISIL recruits. This pattern of deception is similarly displayed by the lack of skeptical questioning of the actions, attending associations and initial media reports of the "recent Muslim convert" who conveniently disappeared into oblivion in Ottawa on October 22nd.

As with 9/11, why has there been no credible independent investigation into events that took place in Ottawa on October 22nd, events that provide the primary justification for Bill C-51? Who can fail but notice the similarities between the current electoral strategy of Stephen Harper who is running for a second majority government as a wartime prime minister and George W. Bush's declaration in the Axis of Evil speech that you're either with him or you're with the terrorists?

Of all the Cold War events involving conflict between Islamic and secular governments, none was more dramatic or consequential than that which

began in the upsurge of popular opposition to the Shah of Iran in the late 1970s. In 1979 the revolutionary force of Shia Islam, the most powerful heritage unifying the majority of Iranian citizens, was given decisive voice and leadership by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Ayatollah returned to the Iranian capital in triumph after a long period of exile primarily in Iraq.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran was a puppet dictator imposed in 1953 through the behind-the-scenes machinations of the CIA. Prior to the Shah's installation the CIA had acted with the approval of the British government to remove from office the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh. Mosaddegh was disempowered because of his clear intentions to nationalize the proprietary interests in Iran of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, presently BP Oil. A main source of fuel for the Royal Navy in the era of its transition from coal to oil, the twentieth-century history of Iran is very much intertwined with the meteoric rise of the petroleum industry.

The US government of President Jimmy Carter gave its implicit consent to the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The relationship of the United States to the Khomeini government soon soared, however, when Iranian students demonstrating at the US embassy in Tehran overwhelmed the premises and took hostages. This hostage crisis unfolded just as Ronald Reagan became the Republican Party's presidential candidate with George H.W. Bush as his vice-presidential running mate.

Reagan's inner circle played the drama surrounding the holding of US hostages to its advantage. The most decisive move is sometimes described as the October Surprise. The evidence is strong that Ronald Reagan was able to

win the keys to the White House in the 1980 election by making a secret agreement to sell arms to the Khomeini government. What Reagan gained in return was a promise that the US hostages being held in Tehran would not be released until Carter was voted out of office.

This secret deal negotiated in Paris by Reagan's vice-presidential running mate, George H.W. Bush, helped set in motion the complex of transactions that would come to light in the Iran-Contra-BCCI scandal. The scandal, one that had a significant Canadian dimension, put some light on the criminality then proliferating in and around the US executive branch. This criminality, including the CIA's financing of its covert operations through the running of illicit drugs from Central America, was one of several aspects of the criminal activity shielded from public view by the veils of national security.

The Political Use of Religion

In retrospect the presidency of Ronald Reagan marked a major shift in global geopolitics entailing a radical transformation in many balances of power. The most assertive group pushing the boundaries of a rapid change came to be known as neoconservatives. Neoconservatives embody a trajectory of influence personified in the politics of, for instance, Reagan himself, Margaret Thatcher, Benjamin Netanyahu, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Stephen Harper, and David Frum.

The neoconservative revolution initiated with the election of Ronald Reagan required a new global enemy to replace the communist enemy once the Soviet Union ceased to exist late in 1991. That need was met when the

events of 9/11 were depicted in a way that transformed the regional enemies of the Jewish state of Israel as the worldwide enemies of Western civilization. In the new paradigm to replace the bipolarism of the Cold War, Western civilization was narrowly defined as a Judeo-Christian creation set in opposition to the culture of Islam.

This interpretation leaned heavily on the work of Bernard Lewis as popularized by Samuel Huntington in his text, *The Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington introduced his interpretation in 1992 in a lecture for the American Enterprise Institute, one of many business-supported neoconservative think tanks that include the Fraser Institute in Canada. The treatment of Islam as an aberrant culture hostile to the Western heritage is a power-serving construction that fails to take into account the depth and the complexity of cultural and religious interaction especially in the rich civilization encircling the Mediterranean Sea.

One illustration of this synergistic dynamism involves the creative exchanges between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Islamic caliphate of Al-Andulus. This interaction is integral to the history of the Iberian Peninsula and to the artistic, scientific and juridical achievements initiated in the European Renaissance.

The protagonists of the neoconservative movement seek to push back processes of secularization implicit in many schools of liberalism. Neoconservatives tend to characterize religion as a force of triumphal ascendance or as a force of evil terror. The title and tone of the post-9/11 book by Frum and Perle epitomize the negotiation of this duality. In *An End*

to Evil Frum and Perle mock what they see as the naïve liberalism of Jimmy Carter and his supporters, a group that “had convinced themselves that Khomeini was a kind of Iranian Desmond Tutu—a third world religious leader expressing legitimate discontents in spiritual language.”

As we have seen, the Cold War orientation of President Reagan towards the Iranian Revolution was more nuanced and complex than Frum and Pearl acknowledge because of the US investment in building up political Islam in Eurasia as an anti-Soviet wedge. The strategy of secretly helping to arm Iran through Israel came partially to light as the Iran-Contra-BCCI scandal unfolded in the late 1980s. At the same time the Reagan government provided billions of dollars of military aid, including chemical weapons, to the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein whose invasion of Iran in 1980 instigating a gruesome eight-year conflict.

In his capacity as religious guardian of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini issued strict fatwa prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons although his country was faced with frequent chemical attacks from the Iraqi Armed Forces. The duplicity of the Reagan government’s role on both sides of the conflict needs to be understood in the context of the US government’s Cold War support of the forces of religious affirmation.

While there were many theatres for this US strategy of building up religious opponents to atheistic communism, the best known are Afghanistan and Poland in the 1980s. To overcome the weight of Soviet dominance in Poland, Reagan’s CIA worked closely with Pope Jean-Paul and Roman

Catholic clergy to assist in the rise of the Solidarity trade union movement. This strategy culminated in 1990 with the election of Solidarity's leader, Lech Walesa, as Poland's president.

The Pre-Emptive Principle

The career of Frum's co-author, Daniel Perle, is emblematic of the importance of US-Israeli ties in both the pre-9/11 genesis and post-9/11 conduct of the Global War on Terror. One of the defining expressions of this exercise of US military muscle was the decision in 2003 to expand the 9/11 Wars beyond Afghanistan to Iraq.

Like other Israel First members of the Bush war cabinet including Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Dov Zakheim, and David Wursmer, Perle was deeply involved in the decision by the President George W. Bush to remove from power the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, a former favoured ally of the United States. The important role of what they refer to as the Israel Lobby in this decision, one entailing an enormous investment of military, political and financial capital, has been adeptly demonstrated by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt in their classic text.

Richard Perle was instrumental in helping to lay out the groundwork for the US invasion of Iraq in an important position paper written for the Likud Party leader, Benjamin Netanyahu. Perle was the lead author of this document written specifically for Netanyahu and his inner circle as he took

power as Prime Minister of Israel in 1996. Perle and his co-authors proposed that Netanyahu make a “Clean Break” with the past, and particularly with the socialistic heritage of the Labour Zionism that had dominated Israel’s politics since its inception as a sovereign state in 1947. In particular Perle et. al. proposed that Netanyahu’s government “transcend” the kind of land-for-peace negotiations attempted in the Oslo Accords negotiated with Yasser Arafat’s Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Significantly the *Clean Break* document promoted a core concept of the Global War on Terror, namely “pre-emptive wars” to be applied initially in changing the governing regimes of Syria, Iraq and Iran. From the instituting of the Patriot Act within weeks of 9/11 to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 to the introduction of the Harper government’s Bill C-51 in 2015, concepts of pre-emption provide a key to understanding the underlying strategies of the Global War on Terror in all its many continuing iterations.

The far-ranging applications of the pre-emptive concept overturn the legal outgrowths of generation upon generation of evolution in the juridical construction of the rule of law. With 9/11 as the stimulus, the rules of national governance and international relations have been radially altered. There is no end in sight of the erasure of core principles of due process, the necessity of showing evidence and the need to assume innocence until guilt has been proven in a court of law. As a result individuals, groups, governments and transnational organizations all over the world have been subjected to the coercive force of pre-emptive interventions. They have faced punishments and constraints not for what they have done, but rather for what it is predicted they might do.

There is of course huge subjectivity in the decisions of those empowered to make pre-emptive predictions and then act on them, often destroying lives in the process. These decisions are often made by the same national security agencies that are known to have abused their powers in the Cold War to disguise criminal activities including drug dealing and insider trading. The architects of the Global War on Terror have enormously expanded and extended the powers of national security agencies in the Cold War to engage in gross violations of human rights with impunity.

Benjamin Netanyahu, Neoconservatism
and the Global War on Terror

Benjamin Netanyahu has emerged as one of the world's most outspoken advocates of subordinating the rule of law to the principles of pre-emptive war and pre-emptive police intervention. Again and again Netanyahu highlights Iran as the most menacing polity in the world, as a potential and likely nuclear predator that must be subjected to the massive pre-emptive intervention.

Since 2012 the policy of the Canadian government towards Iran is pretty much based on Prime Minister Netanyahu's articulation of Israel's orientation to Iran. As in so many fields of Canadian foreign policy, the Harper government's position on Iran extends the policies of Likudnik-dominated Israel. The underlying understanding on which these policies are based is that the Islamic structure of Iran's Shia constitution must be overturned by encouraging, fomenting and assisting dissidence from within.

Failing that, Iran must be invaded, disassembled and remade to suit the interests of the Western powers in much the same fashion as was the case during the imposed governance of the Shah.

As times passes, Benjamin Netanyahu is emerging more and more as the primary embodiment of contemporary neoconservatism, as the Napoleon of the Global War on War. An Israeli soldier, diplomat and politician who spent some of his formative years growing up in a suburb of Philadelphia, Netanyahu's staying power is formidable. Just days ago he demonstrated his political resilience in Israeli politics by emerging yet again from a national election as the Jewish state's prime minister

Netanyahu can be viewed as one of the inventors of the core paradigm in of the Global War on Terror. In 1979 and again in 1984 he put together conferences designed to advance the contention that international terrorism was becoming the most serious menace to the very survival of the group of countries he pictured as Western democracies. In 1982 Netanyahu first published the conference papers in an edited book he entitled, *International Terrorism: Challenges and Responses*. Then came in 1986, *Terrorism: How the West Can Win*.

Versions of these texts have been republished many times. In 1997 he featured more of his own words in an abbreviated text entitled, *Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists*. This volume was republished in 2001 just days after the 9/11 debacle. The volume's publisher, Macmillan, introduced the following advertising copy,

Netanyahu sees an even more potent threat from the new international terrorism which is increasingly the product of Islamic militants, who draw their inspiration and directives from Iran and its growing cadre of satellite states. The spread of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, coupled with the possibility that Iran will acquire nuclear weapons, poses a more frightening threat from an adversary less rational and therefore less controllable than was Soviet Communism. How democracies can defend themselves against this new threat concludes this provocative book.

The direct connection drawn between what Netanyahu sees as a looming Iranian-based Islamic threat and the former Soviet-based communist threat is very telling. By introducing this comparison Netanyahu presents a way for the military and national security establishment inherited from the Cold War. He presented a justification for the United States to retain the predominance in its political economy of the military-industrial complex that it has built up ever since it responded to the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by entering the Second World War.

Netanyahu's leadership of the Likud Party in Israel continues into the present the ideological heritage of Revisionist Zionist, a stream of right-wing Jewish nationalism devoted to the creation and expansion of *Eretz Yisrael*, a term that is sometimes translated as Greater Israel. This particular stream of Zionist strategy and action originated in armed and militant opposition to any constraints on rapid Jewish immigration into Palestine when this region was subject to the governance of Great Britain.

Ze'ev Jabotinsky is the founder of Revisionist Zionism, the dominant root of the current Likud Party. Netanyahu's father, Benzion, was for a time Jabotinsky's personal secretary before becoming a university professor of history in the United States. Those who took up the mantle of Revisionist Zionism after the Second World War sought to dislodge the British imperial government from its governing role in Palestine. The militant military wing of this movement formed Irgun and the Stern Gang whose violent interventions including blowing up the King David Hotel in 1946. This hotel housed the headquarters of those administering the British mandate in Palestine.

Menachem Begin was one of those that took part in the bombing of the King David hotel, an episode that many consider a textbook example of terrorism as a calculated way of influencing international opinion and politics. Begin was instrumental in founding the Likud Party Party in 1973. Elected as Israeli Prime Minister in 1977, Begin's adherence to the growth and expansion of a Greater Israel made him an especially avid proponent of the rapid construction of Jewish settlements on the west bank of the Jordan River.

The West Bank Lands lands had been seized by the Israeli Defense Force in the 1967 War. The spoils of military conquest, these lands have ever since tellingly named the Occupied Territories. The indigenous inhabitants of the Occupied Territories remain like the Palestinian inmates of Gaza an occupied people, stateless peoples held outside the legal frame of Israeli citizenship. Both Gaza and the West Bank were designated as the land base

of an Arab country for the indigenous Palestinians. The instrument of this designation is UN Resolution 181, the enactment that initially invested the Israeli state with its primary claim to international legitimacy.

Benjamin Netanyahu inherited from Revisionist Zionism, from his father and from his mentor, Menachem Begin, the generally harsh perception that the success and expansion of the Jewish state necessitates some killing and ruthlessness in eliminating and clearing aside Arab people. The Likud viewpoint on the inevitability of this kind of violent intervention to make available more territory for the Jewish state of Israel has become an integral feature of neoconservatism.

Christian Zionism

Underlying this conception are some very influential interpretations of Biblical narratives, but particularly those in the Jewish Torah that also form the basis of the first five chapters of the Christian Old Testament. These narratives described the divine mission assigned to the Jews, to the Israelites, as God's Chosen People.

This Biblical conception unites the Jewish state of Israel with the Puritan founders of New England who sought to found a New Jerusalem, a New Zion, a City on the Hill. This sense of God's Manifest Destiny gave a sense of divine sanction, blessing and duty to the westward expansion of the United States. There are obvious overlaps between this history of Manifest Destiny and the neoconservative conceptions of Likud, Revisionist Zionism, Greater Israel. Manifest Destiny seemed to give religious sanction to the US

takeover of the lands of Indians and Mexicans. Christian Zionism, the movement that has become so integral to neoconservatism, pictures the Israeli state as a polity mandated by God to expand into the infidel territories to its savage east.

Christian Zionism became integral to the evangelical base of former US President, George W. Bush, and to current Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper. The most influential voice of Christian Zionism in North America is Pastor John Charles Hagee, National Chairman of Christians United for Israel. Pastor Hagee regularly preaches that the Koran instructs Muslims to kill Christians and Jews and that Islam represents a greater threat to his flock than the Axis powers of Germany, Japan and Italy during World War II.

The most powerful media mogul in the world, Rupert Murdoch, is a supporter of Hagee and a Christian Zionist himself. This bias is very apparent in the way the Murdoch media empire made itself a primary propaganda arm of the Global War on Terror.

David Frum has played an important role in helping to forge the propaganda arsenal of the Global War on Terror, to help energize, expand and integrate Christian Zionism as an instrument of neoconservative power. In his contribution to the Axis of Evil speech, in his co-authorship of *An End to Evil*, and in many other efforts of spin doctoring David Frum has applied the skills he picked up from Ted Byfield in developing theological language to advance neoconservative agendas. This skill is well displayed in his proposal

that the number one key to “winning the War on Terror” is to “support the overthrow of the terrorist mullahs of Iran.”

Different Visions of Conservatism in Conflict

Clearly religious politics permeate the hostility of most neoconservatives towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. This hostility is now embedded in Canada’s foreign policy towards the world’s primary Persian polity. In Canada the politicization of the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is reflected in the Canadian government’s declared position that it will never publicly criticize the Jewish state of Israel. As displayed in the debate over Bill C-51 as well as in the debate over the prohibition on wearing niqabs during the investiture ceremonies of new Canadian citizens, the same government whose public position is that Israel can do no wrong stands simultaneously accused of fomenting Islamophobia for political advantage.

To gain perspective on the politicization of religion in Canada’s orientation to Iran it makes sense to go back to the year 1996. As Richard Perle was developing the *Clean Break* document in 1996 David Frum, his future co-author, was teaming up with Ezra Levant to organize a “Winds of Change” conference on Canadian conservatism.

The conference took place in Calgary Alberta, an oil-rich jurisdiction that is sometimes described as Texas North. In this period Levant was a law student at the University of Alberta. Along with Stephen Harper, Levant was a very active member of Preston Manning’s Reform Party. He was also an aspiring

neoconservative pundit who seemed to be modeling his career after that of David Frum.

Several months after the “Winds of Change” event Stephen Harper and Professor Tom Flanagan co-authored an essay reflecting back on the ideas raised at the conference. Entitled “Our Benign Dictatorship,” this essay is published online. Three years earlier Harper had obtained a Master’s degree in economics from the University of Calgary. In that era Harper returned to U of C from time to time to confer with his former teachers as well as to hear or deliver lectures from time to time.

Prof. Flanagan is a native of Indiana with degrees from Notre Dame and Duke universities in the United States. In a teaching career of 45 years at the U of C, Prof. Flanagan has had an enormous impact as a teacher and as a political adviser. One of his former students, Ezra Levant, described the Political Scientist as “the master strategist, the godfather — even of Harper.”

Tom Flanagan was the first person hired in the late 1960s by the founder of the U of C Poli Sci Department. This founder, Dr. and Colonel E. Burke Inlow, had moved to Calgary directly from his work in covert intelligence at the Pentagon. Interestingly, Prof. Inlow’s academic specialty was the history and politics of the oil and gas industry in Iran. By the 1990s Prof. Flanagan had become the most engaged member of the circle of right-wing professors at the U of C that maintained close ties with the future Canadian prime minister.

Harper and Flanagan's essay outlined a strategy to which they would pretty much adhere in the years ahead. Harper applied himself concertedly to working his way into systems for funding and thereby advancing neoconservative policies through Canada's parliamentary democracy. Prof. Flanagan tended to act as his younger colleague's political coach or, as Levant put it, as his godfather.

In doing so Prof. Flanagan became Canada's primary neoconservative generator of a constant stream of data, advice, and backroom interaction that would prove instrumental in transforming Canada's political landscape. I cannot think of a Canadian scholar who, while maintaining his full-time academic position, has exercised so much influence in fundamentally altering the basic shape and substance of Canada's political culture.

The title of the essay by Harper and Flanagan refers to the hold that the Liberal Party had exercised over the governance of Canada throughout much of the twentieth century. Harper and Flanagan proposed that the key to changing the conditions of "Our Benign Dictatorship" was to move Canadian conservatism to the right and thereby abandon any effort to retain some semblance of the Red Tory tradition embodied in some of the policies of the Progressive Conservative Party.

The Red Tory heritage is rooted in opposition to the Anglo-American secessionists that founded the United States. The Anglo-American rejection of the British Empire bears some resemblances to the Zionist rejection of the British mandate in Palestine or the Afrikaner rejection of the Aboriginal policies of the British rulers of South Africa as expressed in the Great Trek

inland of the 1830s. All of these secessionist movements were motivated by an unwillingness to accept imposition of British rules in the relationship with Indigenous peoples.

The founders of the US began their enterprise by instigating a civil war in British North America. They were helped in their quest to be freed of British imperial constraints to their rapid westward expansion by a formal alliance with the French monarchy and informally by many Whig supporters in Great Britain.

As George Grant, Gad Horowitz, William H. Nelson, Sid Wise, G.F. G. Stanley, W.L. Morton and many others have observed, Canadian conservatives have historically embraced the conception of a strong and proactive central state. As the inheritors of the legacy of the conservative side in the American Revolution, their tendency is to treat the central state as an important instrument of collective wellbeing. An important key to protecting the security of Canada is to fend off formal annexation as well as cultural and commercial engulfment by the United States.

In 1965 in *Lament for a Nation*, George Grant predicted that Canada's independence was essentially over when the indigenous conservatism of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker was struck down by the electoral outcome of a Liberal Party alliance with covert US operatives under orders from President John F. Kennedy. The shape of things to come was signaled when the Progressive Conservative Party led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney effectively outflanked the Liberal Party as the primary proponent of

increased economic and military integration of Canada with the United States.

The plan hatched by Harper and Flanagan in 1996 can be characterized as an even more extreme fulfillment of George Grant's prophetic lament. Harper and Flanagan aggressively and openly rejected Red Toryism, a heritage whose contemporary expressions were consistent with some aspects of Scandinavian-style social democracy. This contempt was reflected in the co-authors dismissal of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada as members of a "B Team for the Liberals."

The authors asked, "Can Canada ever have a version of the Thatcher-Reagan phenomenon—a broadly based, centre-right party... and able to govern?" From the neoconservative perspective of Harper and Flanagan the effort to replace indigenous conservatism with an imported version of conservatism entailed, for instance, government downsizing, the privatization of public property, as well as the deregulation of all businesses but especially those in the resource extraction sector, financial services, and military contracting.

Harper and Flanagan advanced the case that the Reform Party of Canada provided the key to doing an end run around the Red Tory heritage of indigenous conservatism. They saw this Red Tory inheritance from the conservative side of the American Revolution--- an inheritance stressing public service, the public interest, and the common good--- as an impediment to the achievement of a parliamentary majority for Reagan-Thatcher-style governance in Canada.

A published authority on Canadian Indian policy, Prof. Flanagan was completely contemptuous of the style of Crown-Aboriginal treaty alliances promoted by Sir William Johnson, the real founder of the Red Tory tradition in Canada. Johnson's authorship of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 introduced the principle that representatives of the imperial government were constitutionally required to obtain Indian consent for the westward expansion of Euro-American settlements into the Aboriginal territories beyond the boundaries of the Thirteen Colonies.

In my view, the unwillingness of the Anglo-American rebels to accept these constraints on the freedom to violate the human rights of Indigenous peoples was in the most potent stimulus to the American Revolution. The Tea Party caricaturists among whom Harper and Flanagan can be counted seem totally unaware that those who descended on Boston Harbor disguised as Indians in 1773 did so as opponents, not embodiments, of the conservatism of the day.

Social Credit, Anti-Semitism, Christian Zionism,
and Neoconservatism

The Reform Party was founded in 1987 by Preston Manning, an evangelical Christian whose father, Ernest, had been premier of Alberta and leader of the provincial Social Credit between 1943 and 1968. The evangelical religious conservatism of this Social Credit heritage in Alberta was seen as a great plus, especially in the eyes of Stephen Harper.

Harper's own Christian devotions developed rapidly after he moved from Toronto to Alberta while in his 20s. Harper's Christian evangelism became a

very important feature of the future prime minister's carefully cultivated political personae. His embrace of a missionary Protestantism helped Harper to connect with the Christian entourage surrounding Preston Manning.

Preston Manning's father came to prominence in Alberta by aligning himself with William "Bible Bill" Aberhart, the premier of Alberta from 1935 to 1943. Aberhart rose to power by treating Alberta pretty much as his personal Protestant theocracy ruled from his regular Sunday afternoon Bible hour broadcast on CFCN.

From the perspective of those trying to build up Canadian neoconservatism, there was a major problem in attempting draw on the heritage of the Albertan Social Credit Party as a way of downgrading, pre-empting or ideally destroying altogether the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. That problem was the deep and dark strain of anti-Semitism in Social Credit ideology.

The problem of combating anti-Semitism was integral to the larger neoconservative project of turning to their purpose right-wing Christian groups throughout North America. The nub of the challenge was to re-engineer the anti-Jewish propensities of many of these groups and transform this strain of religious antagonism into the anti-Muslim animosities of Christian Zionism.

To be fair, Preston Manning and his father had tried, with mixed success, to prevent from gathering too densely under their political tents those that often smeared Jews wantonly and indiscriminately. Nevertheless Major C.H.

Douglas, the UK-based founder of the international Social Credit, was well known for dogmatically blaming Jews for many of the world's problems but especially its economic problems.

As expertly chronicled by Howard Palmer, a former Professor of History at the University of Lethbridge, wild and extravagant condemnations of Jews became well developed memes among many Social Credit activists. In his essay, "Politics, Religion and Anti-Semitism in Alberta," Palmer highlighted the unrelenting Jew bashing of Norman Jacques, Social Credit MP for Wetaskiwin in the Canadian Parliament from 1935 to 1949. Jacques opposed the creation of Israel in 1947. For many years Jacques would make annual speeches in the House of Commons where he sometimes paraphrased Henry Ford who had characterized international Jewry as "the world's worst problem."

The "Winds of Change" conference in 1996 was itself a response to the anti-Semitic heritage of the Alberta Social Credit Party, the primary taproot of the Reform Party. This Reform Party would in turn beget the Alliance Party in 2000 and then the Conservative Party of Canada in 2003. There were many dark and ruthless dealings in what lies behind the dropping of the word "Progressive from the venerable old PC brand that ironically still survives in the name of the dominant provincial party of Alberta.

The featuring of two bright urban Jews as hosts of the "Winds of Change" event conveyed the message that the Reform Party was widening its constituency beyond its largely rural and Christian fundamentalist base. David Frum and Ezra Levant could be viewed as harbingers of the message

that the anti-Semitism of Alberta's Social Credit Party had been relegated to the past. Their active role in the Reform Party signaled that those carrying forward the political trajectory of Bible Bill Aberhart were serious about adapting themselves to Canada's diversity. This wonderful pluralism is on full display especially in the vibrant multiculturalism of our country's urban centres.

Divide and Conquer

While it was one thing to show equitable openness to all of the religious constituencies in a diverse society, it is quite another thing for the government of Canada to take sides in conflicts often represented as wars of religion in the psychological battlefields of mass communications. There is very little that is happenstance in media representations in Canada and throughout the so-called West broadcasting very manipulative political campaigns based on strategies to create, build up, emphasize, stage manage, and exploit religious antagonisms for electoral gain.

The war profiteers and their political agents systematically exploited the imagery of religious idealism versus Godless communism in the Cold War. In the ideological salesmanship attending Global War on Terror there has been even more calculated manipulation of the theme of division *among* the three Abrahamic religions and *within* them as well.

Neoconservatives are known to be particularly adept at highlighting religious schisms in the process of identifying, intensifying and exploiting political wedge issues. This tactic of divide and rule is no recent thing but

rather a primary strategy of imperial powers that were able to dominate many of the world's Indigenous peoples over centuries.

This imperial drama is now being re-enacted in the treatment of the Palestinian people. It is being re-enacted in the Harper government's oppressive Aboriginal policies. Significantly, Tom Flanagan had a big part in formulating and then trying to entrench these policies especially as a frequent expert witness for the Crown the federal government's litigious denial and negation of Aboriginal and treaty rights in the courts.

The most divisive and easily exploited wedge issue of all concerns the future of the part of the world that has been represented in the world's three Abrahamic religions as the Holy Land. This conflict has historically focused on the subjugated condition of the dispossessed Palestinians. Recent developments, however, are putting a spotlight on the dichotomy between the Jewish state of Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran as the most dangerous site of international volatility.

The intensity of this imperial drama is presently on display in the neoconservative propaganda campaign to prepare Western public opinion for Iran's invasion. The Canadian government has become a significant co-conspirator in this plan by echoing in our country's foreign policy the Likudnik position of Israeli Prime Minister. One can almost hear the voice of Netanyahu in the Canadian government's determination that "Iran is the most significant threat to global peace and security in the world today."

There is nothing anti-Semitic in criticizing the current government of Canada for basing our foreign policies on a militant ideology of Revisionist Zionism, expansionary Zionism, ethnocentric Zionism. Unfortunately the current position of the Canadian government points directly away from the necessity of finding and holding middle ground in the world's most dangerous and volatile theatre of conflict. This abandonment of the middle ground in many theatres of tension is the inevitable outcome of the polarization of Canadian politics specifically and global politics more generally. The destruction of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada stands as one of the most eloquent examples of the polarizing thrust of this project.

The speech delivered by Stephen Harper in the Israeli Knesset in early 2014 helps clarify who and what was behind the regime change in Canada whose most intense interval was between 2003 and 2011. In 2003 Stephen Harper was the key figure in the invention of a new political party to replace the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. In 2011 he seized control of the Prime Minister's Office through a combination of effective electioneering and voter fraud. During the most crucial phase of the regime change the seats of power in the Canadian ruling class were significantly rearranged with the help, among others, of Tom Flanagan, David Frum, and the editorial team assembled by former media mogul Conrad Black.

The political base of neoconservatism in North America was thereby widened as Stephen Harper was projected into office amidst the enervated psychological environment generated by the 9/11 Wars. The major outcome of this regime change is that what passes for Canadian conservatism today is

very different than the nation building style of conservatism extolled, attempted, and sometimes implemented by John A. Macdonald, Robert Borden, John Diefenbaker and Joe Clark.

The Harper government's hardline anti-Iranian foreign policy takes no notice whatsoever of the fact the Iranian Armed Forces are actively engaged in fighting the strange militarized monstrosity named wrongly and mischievously the Islamic State. Who is funding ISIL? Who is arming ISIL?

A related set of questions asks why the Canadian government is treating Iran as the most significant threat to global peace and security in the world today when the Islamic Republic is opposing the exploits of the so-called Islamic State, the non-state entity against which the Harper government has declared war. What deceptions and slights of hand might lie behind Stephen Harper's seeking a second majority government by presenting himself as wartime prime minister? Why are these questions not being forthrightly posed and addressed where it counts most?

The determination of our federal government to take sides in the monumental geopolitical rift developing between the Jewish state of Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran puts Canada dramatically out of out of line with the current position of the US executive branch. Indeed, the alignment of the Canadian government with the position of the US Republican Party Senators that have sided with Benjamin Netanyahu to undermine the power of the US presidency has huge implications for Canada's position in the world.

A dominant meme in the Canadian political imagination is that our country moved from the formal imperial orbit of Great Britain to commercial, cultural and political domination by the US government and its corporations. Now the Canadian government seems to be breaking away from its position of subordination to US interests in order to subjugate itself to the perceived interests of Likudnk-dominated Israel. In making this shift the Harper government is aligning itself with the trajectory of thought and action that extends from Ze'ev Jabotinsky to Menachem Begin to Benjamin Netanyahu and the Republican Party's most generous funder, Casino magnet Sheldon Adelson.

In 1996 the "Clean Break" doctrine of Richard Perle and the Harper-Flanagan assessment of "Our Benign Dictatorship" help cast Labor Zionism in Israel and Red Toryism in Canada into similar states of obsolescence. One of the many consequences in Canada and the United States is that some of the more progressive impulses of the Christian Social Gospel gave way to the anti-Islamic war-making fixations of Christian Zionism.

In the process the idealism attached to the vision of Canada as a land of justice, fairness, compromise, multiculturalism and reconciliation on the middle ground has been downgraded. In the place of this idealism there has emerged a triumphalist coalition whose most strident voices call for victory over the much-hyped and politically manipulated Muslim enemy. David Frum is one of those voices. The co-author of an Islamophobic instructional manual on *How to Win the War on Terror* and thereby put *An End to Evil*,

he gives a Canadian twist to the convergence of many historical forces in George Bush's infamous Axis of Evil speech.

Nuclear Energy and the Terror of Nuclear Weaponry

In 2003 was a busy year. Just as Harper and Flanagan achieved their goal of terminating the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, Iraq was invaded as *An End to Evil* was published. The Canadian government refused to join the US-led invasion of Iraq. This decision led MP Stephen Harper to accuse Prime Minister Jean Chretien of betraying the ideals of Western civilization.

In the months leading up to the US-led invasion of Iraq the Bush White House and its envoys warned the world that such an action was necessary because the Iraqi government led by Saddam Hussein was on the verge of acquiring weapons of mass destruction. In the resulting barrage of media spin the term *WMD* quickly entered the language of popular political discourse.

In 2003 the imagery of Osama bin Laden as the diabolical mastermind of 9/11 was relegated to the realm of amnesia so his memory would not detract for the media spin depicting Saddam Hussein as Islamic Terrorist #1. While Khalid Sheik Mohammed was briefly brought out from his accommodation in a US torture chamber with the thought he might be put on trial in New York for 9/11 crime, that plan was quickly abandoned. Instead, the US government decided to mark the 10th anniversary of 9/11 by revisiting the legend of Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden's rediscovery was only reported after the US Armed Forces were said to have buried him at sea without a trace. If the role assigned to bin Laden is not a fable, which it is, it would have made much more sense to have arrested and interrogated the supposed mastermind of all terrorist masterminds. Apparently this consideration was brushed aside. The global community of Muslims, the ummah, audibly groaned when it was announced by the White House that bin Laden's burial at sea was done out of respect for Muslim custom.

Many of the same accusations pointed at Saddam Hussein are now being hurled at the Islamic Republic of Iran. Very little has been altered in the barrage of neocon condemnations as the war party moves from Iraq to Iran as it check off the targeted countries on the Axis of Evil list. This list was created in knowing and purposeful disregard for the evidence of what actually did or did not happen on 9/11.

As the Napoleon of the Global War on Terror, Benjamin Netanyahu has been the most persistent and outspoken proponent of directing political, economic and military assaults at Iran. Since at least 2002 Benjamin Netanyahu has not deviated from the accusation that the government of Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program disguises a covert scheme to acquire and deploy nuclear weapons.

The volume of this unwavering accusation was turned up when Netanyahu addressed the US Congress earlier this spring to demonize the government of Iran. Once again the scepter of weapons of mass destruction, WMD, is

being paraded before the public as the ante is upped yet again is generating fear for yet another assault on a predominantly Muslim population.

Strangely this most consequential round of fear mongering emanated from a foreign leader provided the most prestigious podium at the very heart of the US Congress. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was invited to exploit this bully pulpit against the wishes of US President Barack Obama and to the great dissatisfaction of many elected members in both houses of Congress.

President Obama's message in his Nowruz speech welcoming in the Persian New Year contrasted dramatically with the Nowruz speech of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Where Harper characterized the Iraqi government as oppressive and illegitimate, President Obama held out an olive branch. He said "My message to you—the people of Iran—is that together we have to speak up for the future we seek. This year, we have the best opportunity in decades to pursue a different future between our countries."

From the wording of President Obama's Nowruz speech and from news I have been receiving from other sources I predict there will be some kind of formal agreement this year emerging from the negotiations between the government of Iran and the government of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany. I should underline here that Israel has no official standing in the negotiations although its representatives have been conferring with the US delegation at every stage in the process. It might also be of interest that the *Wall Street Journal* has recently alleged

that Israeli agents have been covertly spying on US officials taking part in the talks.

It bears considering in this context that the Israeli government does possess a large nuclear arsenal, although to this day it has never admitted that it is armed in this way. Moreover, Israel is the only country in the Middle East to have not signed onto the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The government of Iran ratified this UN instrument in 1970.

The subject of the negotiations on Iran's nuclear energy program became a major subject of our deliberations at the New Horizon Conference in Tehran. The event took place last autumn just as an earlier round of these negotiations was reaching a significant deadline. Because these negotiations are so tied to Iran's orientation to the global economy they tend to hold centre stage in the very lively public discourse animating Iranian politics.

The fact that such negotiations are taking place at all reflects the outcome of national elections in 2013 that saw the replacement as national president of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with Hassan Rouhani. Rouhani won the election on the basis of his reputation as a pragmatist and as a proponent of more accommodating relations between his country and the West. The significant policy shifts that resulted from the national election of 2013 are part of an ebb and flow of argument, negotiation and compromise within and among competing factions. These transactions express Iran's democratic attributes within the framework of Islamic laws and principles.

One of the conference's featured presenters was Dr. Gareth Porter, an American investigative reporter who is obviously involved in the internal ebb and flow of Iranian politics. He spoke at considerable length about his new book on the international politics swirling around Iran's nuclear energy program. At the conference Dr. Porter gave me a review copy of his deeply researched and elaborately referenced volume. I read it carefully when I returned to from Tehran to Lethbridge. The volume is entitled, *Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare* (Charlottesville Virginia: Just World Books, 2014).

The text covers the period beginning in 2002 when various Israeli agencies including Mossad took on the task of disseminating disinformation on the Iranian nuclear program. The book takes on the fear mongering connected to a manufactured crisis. Porter documents the case that there is no credible evidence that the Iranian government is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

As did Ayatollah Khomeini, the current chief cleric of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Sayyid Ali Khamenei, has issued fatwas prohibiting the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons. Indeed, Iran's Islamic clergy, the guardians of the state, stand together in shared opposition to the terror foisted on all humanity by those who create, amass and threaten us all with the horror nuclear weaponry. Such terrible abuse of the laws of nature to threaten violence against the innocent on such a monumental scale runs against the most sacred tenets of Islamic law and against the spiritual principles of all the great religions.

Atoms for Peace?

Iran's program for the production of electricity through nuclear energy was started under the Shah's auspices as part of the US government's promotion of its Atoms for Peace initiative. After some deliberation the new governors of Iran decided to retain the Shah's nuclear energy initiative. The problems began when the Reagan government stepped in to prevent the continuation after the Islamic Revolution of Iran's purchases from a German company of nuclear fuel rods. The decision was then made to produce these nuclear fuel rods domestically.

Like the production of nuclear weapons, the production of nuclear fuel rods requires the so-called enrichment of uranium. The use of technology to enrich uranium, therefore, offers no proof in itself that Iran's nuclear facilities are being gearing up for the making of nuclear bombs. The Israeli government, however, has not dealt honestly with this reality.

Porter's text outlines how the Israeli government concocted false evidence and subverted the proper workings of several institutions including the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Israeli government's busy production of falsified evidence intensified an increasingly elaborate set of economic sanctions, a system of punishments whose origins go back to the US-Iranian hostage crisis and the US government formally taking sides with the government of Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq War.

Part of the blowback presently hitting the Netanyahu government is coming from the spreading realization that Israeli agencies have been disseminating disinformation on many facets of Iran's political economy including the

country's peaceful nuclear energy program. The source of this realization is coming from Porter's book and many other sources.

The economic warfare directed against Iran is one part of a more elaborate set of coercive operations including a major Israeli-American cyberattack aimed that in 2008-2009 crippled several Iranian installations equipped with centrifuges for the enrichment of uranium. The US National Security Agency collaborated with Israeli specialists in the cyberattacks launching digital worms aimed at disabling the production of nuclear fuel rods.

The German-based Siemens company is reported to have helped in the cyberattacks by sharing secret codes unlocking access to software used in Iran's nuclear industry. The cyberattacks seem to have destabilized thousands of computer systems worldwide, disrupting many industrial operations where Siemens products are used including in nuclear plants in Ontario and Japan.

Dr. Porter explains how Israeli disinformation on the Iranian nuclear program was fed for wider distribution to the MeK, the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq. This group conducted a press conference in 2002 to disseminate the disinformation fed to them by Israeli sources. MeK has violently opposed the Iranian government in several domestic attacks and in assaults on several foreign embassies, including an incursion at the Iranian consulate in Ottawa in 1992.

During the Iraq-Iran War MeK was hosted and backed by Iran's enemy, the government of Saddam Hussein. This violent organization collaborates in a

number of ways with Israeli agencies and its members are thought to have received training in the United States. The people and government of Iran have cause to understand to MeK to be a foreign-backed terrorist group.

Conclusions

Many countries including Canada have nuclear energy programs. The question of how best to produce energy for various industrial purposes is of course one of the most pressing and controversial global issues of our time. Especially after Fukushima I for one am no fan of producing electricity through the process of nuclear fission. I can well understand, however, why it has become an important point of principle and pride within Iran that it has the same legal right as every other country to produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

One of the points of contention in the negotiations is the wish by those on the UN Security Council's side of the table, including the US delegation, to frame the final agreement within the terms and procedures laid out in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Chapter VII is concerned with "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Acts of Aggression."

The Iranian people and government have cause to see any agreement conceived and articulated along these lines as unreflective of the reality that they have done nothing wrong in pursuing the peaceful use of nuclear energy as they have a perfect legal right to do. Indeed, they have had to absorb the assaults of cyberattacks, assassinations and economic warfare for

building on the Atoms for Peace program originally promoted in Iran by the US government.

On one level the nuclear negotiations do send out the signal that there is some vitality left in UN procedures and mechanisms to emphasize negotiated alternatives to armed conflict. On the other hand there is a deep sense of irony, hypocrisy and double standards permeating the process. There is plenty of responsibility to go around for the huge and growing threat of nuclear annihilation. This terrible outcome could come in a flash or, as is presently happening, in a long slow decline in the health and viability of all living organisms as we continue to be inundated by more Fukushima-style disasters.

The Iranian government stands accused of stealth in misrepresenting the true nature of its nuclear program. Such accusations would better be directed at the nuclear superpowers including the United States, Russia, China, France, and Israel. Together and individually these states possess huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and are pursuing many secret avenues to create new technologies of nuclearized mass murder.

The direction of public resources into this kind of activity has nothing to do with national security or any other type of security including human security, ecological security or global security. Rather this misappropriation of scarce public resources is part of the crimes against humanity mounted by the arm's industry and its many political lobbyists who have so corrupted our national governments that they are no longer genuinely accountable to

the citizens that elect them. In the name of God, this form of corporate terror from within must stop.

There is a long history of arms merchants working very closely with banking interests to fund both sides in conflicts. The financing of competing armies in military confrontations can be seen as the original hedge funds. The coalition of national armed forces fighting ISIL is based on a very clear example of the same financial backers providing support to both sides in armed conflict. The Canadian government is deeply mired in this duplicity. One of the biggest customers of the Canadian arm's industry is Saudi Arabia. The Wahabi governors of the Saudi dictatorship back ISIL and many other Takfiri groups paid to commit violence most frequently against Muslim people.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is an important Eurasian country. The Islamic State, against which Canada is currently at war, is something entirely different. It is not a state and according to many Muslim people it is not Islamic either. It is in fact a caricature that is being manipulated and exploited to rebrand the neoconservatives' Global War on Terror.

Part of this psychological operation is presently on full display as Stephen Harper seeks a second majority government by presenting himself as a wartime prime minister on the basis of a very dubious interpretation that very probably conceals many aspects of what really happened in Ottawa on October 22nd. Since there has been no credible and independent investigation of what happened the Canadian public is not in a position to know what really happened.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran is now over 35 years old. That is roughly the same period of my academic career so far. Over these decades the Islamic Revolution has created the basis of a fairly stable and well-organized society with considerable give and take among a pluralistic array of distinct communities and constituencies.

Of course Iran is not perfect. No country is. Some human rights violations have taken place in the Islamic Republic. One of them concerns the death of a Zahra Kazemi, a Canadian citizen that met her death in an Iranian prison in 2003.

Unfortunately human right violations take place in all countries including Canada. Our federal government's refusal to investigate the disappearance and murder of an obscene number of Aboriginal women is an example of a human right violations in Canada. Many Aboriginal boys and men are also subject to all manner of abuses aimed at First Nations by the neoconservatives who are no more respectful of Aboriginal rights and titles in Canada than they are of the fundamental human rights of the still stateless Palestinian people.

One of my most memorable experiences in Tehran is when we toured the Ebrat Museum of Tehran after the formal proceedings of the New Horizon conference were over. The museum is in fact the notorious torture chamber deployed by the Shah's secret police SAVAK against those that its agents considered dissidents. We went through chamber after chamber, cell after

cell, seeing displays of the various kinds of torture that were applied to Ebrat's inmates.

Throughout much of the period when the Shah was in power, 1953 to 1979, those confined to the Ebrat prison were deemed to be communists or communist sympathizers. We learned that in the final years of the Shah's rule more and more of those targeted were clerics in the orbit of Ayatollah Khomeini when he was forced to live in exile. Since returning home I have seen figures that somewhere in the neighbourhood of 100,00 individuals were tortured during the reign of the puppet dictator.

This new understanding is helping me to interpret those incredible scenes of jubilation in Tehran that flooded onto our television screens back in 1979. Those pictures showed millions of people obviously happy to embrace the better future they anticipated with the arrival on Iranian soil of Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Revolution that is still unfolding on the sacred ground of Persia.

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