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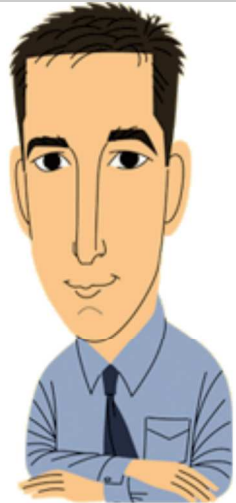
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### Glenn Greenwald's Unclaimed Territory

I was previously a constitutional law and civil rights litigator in New York. I am the author of two New York Times Bestselling books: "How Would a Patriot Act?" (May, 2006), a critique of the Bush administration's use of executive power, and "A Tragic Legacy" (June, 2007), which examines the Bush legacy. My most recent book, "[Great American Hypocrites](#)", examines the manipulative electoral tactics

## Glenn Greenwald

FRIDAY OCT. 2, 2009 07:03 EDT

### Iran: more accomplished in one day of negotiations than in 8 years of threats

Here are two stories from the last 24 hours which provide an interesting and glaring contrast:

[McClatchy](#), reporting on yesterday's meeting with Iran in Geneva:

*Iran also pledged that within weeks it would allow the inspection of a previously covert uranium enrichment facility near the holy city of Qom, and the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, announced that he'd head to Tehran to work out the details.*

[Eli Lake](#), *The Washington Times*, this morning:

*President Obama has reaffirmed a 4-decade-old secret understanding that has allowed Israel to keep a nuclear arsenal without opening it to international inspections, three officials familiar with the understanding said.*

*The officials, who spoke on the condition that they not be named because they were discussing private conversations, said Mr. Obama pledged to maintain the agreement when he first hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in May.*

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**Salon Radio: Patriot Act and FISA reforms**

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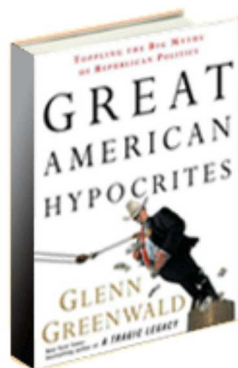
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### "Great American Hypocrites"



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### "A Tragic Legacy"

(2007)

*Under the understanding, the U.S. has not pressured Israel to disclose its nuclear weapons or to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which could require Israel to give up its estimated several hundred nuclear bombs.*

In addition to agreeing to allow full inspections of its Qom facility, Iran yesterday also did this:

*Iran agreed in principle Thursday to ship most of its current stockpile of enriched uranium to Russia, where it would be refined for exclusively peaceful uses, in what Western diplomats called a significant, but interim, measure to ease concerns over its nuclear program. . . .*

*Under the tentative uranium deal, Iran would ship what a U.S. official said was "most" of its approximately 3,000 pounds of low-enriched uranium to Russia, where it would be further refined, to 19.75 percent purity. That is much less than the purity needed to fuel a nuclear bomb.*

*French technicians then would fabricate it into fuel rods and return it to Tehran to power a nuclear research reactor that's used to make isotopes for nuclear medicine.*

Steve Hynd explains why Iran's willingness to agree to this process was both so surprising and so significant. As is true for any tentative agreement with anyone, there is always the possibility that something could happen prior to compliance, but this was a deal reached after a single-day meeting. Just consider that, as [Hynd said on Twitter](#), the **"Obama WH already got more from one buffet lunch with Iran than Bush WH did in 8 years of saber-rattling."** For that reason, it's hard to disagree [with this](#): "In Washington, President Barack Obama said the talks marked 'a constructive beginning' and showed the promise of renewed engagement with Iran . . ." Charles Krauthammer picked a bad day to [haul out the tired neon](#) "appeasement" platitude and apply it to Obama, claiming -- as always -- that negotiations and diplomacy can accomplish nothing, while railing like a madman against Obama's "naivite," "fecklessness," and "wasting time with feel-good posturing."

claims last year.

### Post editors should read their own columnists

A righteous attack on "Polanski apologists" ignores that two of its leading members are at the Washington Post.

### How similar are the cases against Iran and Iraq?

The NYT explores whether government and media behavior now differ from what happened in 2002.

### Talking about Iran on the TV

Who is the belligerent and war-threatening party in the Middle East?

### A glossary of terms in foreign affairs

Righteous anger over Iran raises some deep confusion about the meaning of technical terms.

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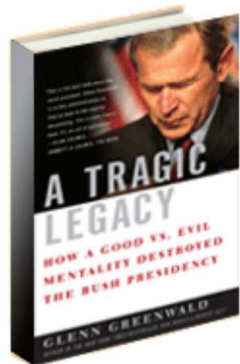
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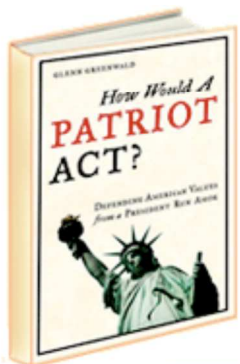
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### "How Would a Patriot Act?"

(2006)



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Related to all of this, actual Middle East expert [Juan Cole has written an excellent article](#) for *Salon* pointing out the "top 10 facts" which many Americans (and, definitely, most American journalists) do not know about Iran. Many of these suppressed facts -- and that's what they are -- are the ones I've been trying to highlight, including during [my MSNBC discussion](#) the other day. Just contemplate how different -- and how vastly improved -- our discussions would be if these basic facts were acknowledged by journalists reporting on Iran and by pundits opining on the subject.

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-- [Glenn Greenwald](#)  
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THURSDAY OCT. 1, 2009 10:02 EDT

## Salon Radio: Patriot Act and FISA reforms

**(updated below - Update II)**



When Congress enacted the Patriot Act in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, it provided for a four-year expiration date for some of the more controversial provisions. In 2005, when it was time for Congress to decide if those should be extended, the Bush administration insisted

that none of those powers had been abused yet (like everything) they were critical to fighting Terrorism. As a result, the [Congress thus overwhelmingly voted to extend them for four more years](#), though this time they required the issuance of a report from the Inspector General of the Justice Department to determine if there had, in fact, been any abuses. Unsurprisingly, the IG's Report that issued in [2007](#) and [2008](#) documented extreme abuse at the FBI with many of those powers. Moreover, it was recently revealed that, far more often than not, federal law enforcement agencies use these powers (including the pernicious "sneak and peek" searches) [in cases having nothing whatsoever to do with Terrorism](#).

As a result, there are currently bills pending in Congress to significantly limit -- or at least impose added safeguards on -- many of the powers vested by the Patriot Act, as well as by last year's FISA Amendments Act. Independently, Senators Feingold and Dodd have sponsored a bill to reverse the immunity bestowed last year

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by Congress on lawbreaking telecoms. The Senate Judiciary Committee meets today to begin the process of debating these various bills. Numerous civil liberties groups from across the political spectrum have joined together to form a coalition to advocate for these reforms, and have put together a [helpful page of information here](#).

Julian Sanchez at Cato has a very helpful review of the various provisions [here](#), and the ACLU's primary pages for these reforms are [here](#) and [here](#).

My guest on *Salon Radio* today to talk about all of this -- including what the White House has been doing, or not doing, on these matters -- is Mike German, long-time former FBI agent and current Policy Counsel at the ACLU. Our discussion is roughly 20 minutes and can be heard by clicking PLAY on the recorder below. A transcript will be posted later today.

**UPDATE:** German, who -- in our discussion this morning -- was mildly optimistic about the prospect for some positive reform (more than I was), just sent me this email:

*I wanted to give you an update regarding the markup of the Leahy-Cardin-Kaufman Patriot Act Sunset Reauthorization bill in the Senate Judiciary Committee this morning. My optimism may have been misplaced. The Committee just passed without objection a Leahy-Feinstein substitute that further watered-down the civil liberties protections in the bill (which were already not as comprehensive as the Feingold-Durbin bill). There is still a chance amendments can be made to insert provisions of the Feingold bill, **but the starting point is much closer to the status quo**. Quite disappointing.*

*I will keep you updated...*

For the reasons I discuss with him in the podcast, that does not surprise me at all.

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### Washington - Mom Lost 47lbs Following 1 Rule

I Cut Down 47 lbs of Stomach Fat In A Month By Obeying This 1 Old Rule

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**UPDATE II:** Isn't it so interesting how the phrase "Patriot Act" was the symbol of everything Democrats claimed to find so heinous during the Bush years, but now that there's a Democratic President, Senate and Congress, it's absolutely certain that the Patriot Act will continue, and civil libertarians are reduced to hoping that there may be some tiny modifications to it, and even that's highly unlikely?



-- **Glenn Greenwald**  
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THURSDAY OCT. 1, 2009 08:02 EDT

## Georgia/Russia: how our political discourse works

Just a timely reminder of the deceitful methods that permeate our political discourse, especially when it comes to demonizing America's Enemy du jour:

[British Telegraph](#), today:

### ***EU blames Georgia for starting war with Russia***

*An EU investigation into the roots of last August's conflict has reserved its harshest criticism for Georgia's military assault on the breakaway region of South Ossetia and its capital Tskhinvali.*

*"Open hostilities **began with a large-scale Georgian military operation against the town of Tskhinvali** and the surrounding areas, launched in the night of 7 to 8 August 2008, the report concluded.*

*"There is the question of whether the use of force by Georgia in South Ossetia was justifiable under international law. It was not."*

*Heidi Tagliavini, the Swiss diplomat who led the EU*



### **Washington - Mom Lost 47lbs Following 1 Rule**

I Cut Down 47 lbs of Stomach Fat In A Month By Obeying This 1 Old Rule

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*"mission", rejected Georgian claims that it was defending itself from an imminent Russian attack or violence from Moscow sponsored South Ossetian militias.*

*"None of the explanations given by the Georgian authorities in order to provide some form of legal justification for the attack lend it a valid explanation," she said.*

*Her report stated: "There was no ongoing armed attack by Russia before the start of the Georgian operation. Georgian claims of a large-scale presence of Russian armed forces in South Ossetia prior to the Georgian offensive could not be substantiated by the mission. It could also not be verified that Russia was on the verge of such a major attack."*

*Russia's military response to Georgia, the EU investigators found, **was initially defensive, and legal, but quickly broke international law** when it escalated into air bombing attacks and an invasion pushing into Georgia well beyond South Ossetia.*

[Sarah Palin, ABC News interview, September 10, 2008:](#)

*PALIN: For Russia to have exerted such pressure in terms of invading a smaller democratic country, **unprovoked**, is unacceptable and we have to keep...*

*GIBSON: You believe unprovoked.*

*PALIN: I do believe unprovoked and we have got to keep our eyes on Russia, under the leadership there.*

[Charles Krauthammer, The Washington Post, October 24, 2008:](#)

*The second test was Georgia, to which Obama responded instinctively with evenhanded moral equivalence, urging restraint on both sides. McCain did not have to consult his advisers to instantly **identify the aggressor**.*

[John McCain, presidential debate, October 7, 2008:](#)

*[Putin] has exhibited most aggressive behavior, obviously, in Georgia. . . . We have to make the Russians understand that there are penalties for these this kind of behavior, this kind of **naked aggression** into Georgia, a tiny country and a tiny democracy.*

[Washington Post Editorial Page, August 28, 2008:](#)

***Those in the West who persist in blaming Georgia or the Bush administration for the present crisis ought to carefully consider those words*** -- and remember the history in Europe of regimes that have made similar claims. This is the rhetoric of an isolated, authoritarian government drunk with the euphoria of a perceived victory and nursing the delusion of a restored empire. It is convinced that the West is too weak and divided to respond with more than words. If nothing is done to restrain it, it will never release Georgia -- and it will not stop there.

[George Will, The Washington Post, August 17, 2008:](#)

*Now McCain's rejuvenated hopes rest on his ability to recast this election, focusing it on who should lead America in a world **suddenly darkened by Russia's war of European conquest**. . . . He should ask Obama to join him in a town meeting on lessons from Russia's aggression. Both candidates favor NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine, perhaps Vladimir Putin's next victim. **But does Russia's behavior cause Obama to rethink reliance on "soft power"** -- dialogue, disapproval, diplomacy, economic carrots and sticks -- which Putin considers almost an oxymoron? . . . Until Russian tanks rolled into Georgia, it seemed that not even the Democratic Party could lose this election. But it might if McCain can make it turn on the question of who is ornery enough to give Putin a convincing, deterring telephone call at 3 a.m.*

[Washington Post Editorial Page, August 14, 2008:](#)

*YOU MIGHT think, at a moment such as this, that the moral calculus would be pretty well understood. . . . Yet, in Washington, the foreign policy sophisticates cluck and murmur that, after all, the Georgians should have known better than to chart an independent course . . . Part of **the blame-the-victim** argument is tactical -- the notion that the elected president of Georgia foolishly allowed the Russians to goad him into a military operation to recover a small separatist region of Georgia. Mr. Saakashvili says, in an article we publish on the opposite page today, that the facts are otherwise, **that he ordered his troops into action only after a Russian armored column was on the move. . . .** Moreover, **the evidence is persuasive and growing that Russia planned and instigated this war.***

[Cathy Young, Reason, October 24, 2008:](#)

*Last Friday, Salon.com columnist and blogger Glenn Greenwald, one of the Bush presidency's harshest critics, blasted both major party presidential candidates for perpetuating the "blatant falsehood" that Russia launched an "unprovoked attack" on Georgia last August. . . . There is something puzzling about the sympathy for Russia evident in many quarters of the American left--from Greenwald to Noam Chomsky to Alexander Cockburn and Katrina vanden Heuvel in *The Nation* (not to mention numerous commenters at sites like Salon.com and *The Huffington Post*). . . . Why the sympathy, then? A knee-jerk reaction that equates hostility to Russia with red-baiting? Or could it be that to some on the left, the cause of sticking a finger in America's eye is progressive enough?*

[John McCain, August 12, 2008:](#)

*Today, we are all Georgians.*

**-- Glenn Greenwald**



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THURSDAY OCT. 1, 2009 06:02 EDT

## Post editors should read their own columnists

[The Washington Post Editorial Page](#) today lashes out at "Roman Polanski's apologists," a group it says is "typified by the comments of Swiss filmmaker Otto Weisser, Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, film and TV celebrity Whoopi Goldberg" and includes "a number of Hollywood luminaries -- Martin Scorsese, Jonathan Demme, David Lynch, to name but a few" as well as "European political and cultural authorities." This hodgepodge of Limbaughian Demons -- Hollywood celebrities and decadent Europeans -- "don't let basic facts, or even simple decency for that matter, get in the way of their defense of this notorious director."

What a righteous stance. For some reason, though, Fred Hiatt's brave editorial crusaders overlooked two of the most wretched defenders of Polanski: their very own columnists. [The Post's Richard Cohen announced](#) that "it's alright with me if Roman Polanski is freed by the Swiss authorities" and disgustingly used the word "seduced" to minimize Polanski's act of child rape. [The Post's Anne Applebaum called](#) Polanski's arrest "outrageous" and invoked virtually every defense scorned today by *The Post* Editors, and thereafter, when responding to critics, [spouted outright falsehoods to suggest that the 13-year-old girl consented](#) (while arguing that the real victim was Applebaum herself, who had to endure mean emails in response to her column).

How strange to watch *Post* editors stand tall in opposition to the easy targets of vapid celebrities and "the French" while steadfastly ignoring the equally twisted (at least) Polanski defenses coming right from their own Op-Ed backyard. But the last thing that ought to be surprising is to find defenses of morally depraved acts on the Op-Ed page of the *Post*; that is, after all, its essence.

Notably, Cohen's opposition to Polanski's punishment ("**it's alright with me** if Roman Polanski is freed") matches almost *verbatim* his [similar defense of Casper Weinberger](#) ("Cap, my Safeway buddy, walks,

and **that's all right with me**"). That, in turn, is entirely consistent with Cohen's [outrage](#) over Lewis Libby's prosecution for obstruction of justice ("As with sex or real estate, it is often best to keep the lights off") and his [demand](#) that Bush torturers and war criminals be similarly protected from consequences. The opposition to Polanski's arrest by these *Post* columnists is, in one sense, merely a natural extension of their general view that criminal prosecution and prison is for the dirty masses but not for elites like themselves.

But more broadly, just look at the sort of things that are routinely defended by the *Post* Op-Ed team -- everything from [torture, illegal eavesdropping](#) and [imprisonment with no trials](#) to [brutal Latin American dictators](#) and unprovoked, devastating American military attacks on [countries that haven't attacked us](#) and [aren't close to doing so](#). As Scott Lemieux [put it](#) this week when noting that, until Applebaum's second Polanski posting, the competition for most repugnant Polanski defense had been a close call: "Never count Fred Hiatt's crew out of any competition for the most immoral and fact-challenged argument!"

For every brutal, lawless and amoral act, there is a defense of it to be found on the *Washington Post* Op-Ed page. That's what makes it so unsurprising that two of Polanski's most ardent defenders are employed there. It's nonetheless bizarre to watch their bosses pretend that such views are found only among easily demonized Hollywood celebrities and the [European pseudo-intellectual class](#). The *Post* Op-Ed page is Ground Zero for defending every corrupt and destructive act that plagues the country. No defense of "basic facts, or even simple decency for that matter" is possible without targeting them first. Washington has the hometown newspaper that perfectly reflects what it is.

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-- **Glenn Greenwald**  
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WEDNESDAY SEPT. 30, 2009 11:31 EDT

## How similar are the cases against Iran and Iraq?

**(updated below - Update II)**

Scott Shane has an [article in today's New York Times](#) examining whether the government and media's behavior now with regard to Iran is similar to what happened in 2002 and 2003 concerning Iraq. I'm quoted in the article in several places, including saying that the "similarities are substantial and disturbing." I want to focus on one point raised by this topic.

Although I think there are ample similarities, I don't think the situations are identical. To begin with, I don't believe (though it's obviously just speculation) that Obama's motive -- at least at this point -- is a military attack on Iran, if for no other reason than such an attack would severely complicate everything else he has to do. The similarities which I referenced have far more to do with how the media uncritically digests and disseminates government claims and how unproven assertions magically transform into unchallenged facts.

Consider this [front-page New York Times article](#) written the same day Obama, along with the leaders of Britain and France, held their melodramatic press conference. This is when and how conventional wisdom about this episode solidified, and that key NYT article does little more than re-print dubious and uncorroborated claims of anonymous American officials that cast the Iranian conduct in the most threatening possible light. One paragraph after the next is guilty of that, though I want to highlight this one in particular, because it's become such a central assertion for those wanting to incite panic about the Iranian facility:

*Mr. Obama said he had withheld making the intelligence public for months because it "is very important in these kind of high-stakes situations to make sure the intelligence is right" -- a clear allusion to former President George W. Bush's release of intelligence on Iraq seven years ago this month that proved baseless.*  
**Mr. Obama's hand was forced, however, after Iran, apparently learning that the site had been discovered by Western intelligence, delivered a vague, terse letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency on Monday disclosing that it was building a second plant, one that it had never mentioned during**

*years of inspections.*

Is there any evidence whatsoever for that claim in bold? Although this assertion is repeated as fact over and over, I've not seen anything to support it other than the claims of anonymous government officials.

What evidence is there that the Iranians reported this facility to the IAEA only because they learned that the U.S. had discovered the facility? For that matter, what evidence is there that the Iranians ever realized this at all? Whether Iran reported the facility voluntarily or only because they were forced to do so by virtue of having been "caught" is a self-evidently relevant fact to all of this, and yet the claims of anonymous officials on this question are uncritically assumed to be true without any skepticism, demands for evidence, or consideration of alternative views.

The same dynamic repeats itself on the question of whether this facility could have been designed for civilian uses, whether Iran really had any feasible hope to hide it (given the pervasive use of satellites), whether there were legitimate reasons for Iran to disperse its nuclear facilities, and whether Iran really violated international law by disclosing this facility to the IAEA more than a year (at least) before operability. Far more than any comparison between the Obama administration's current intentions towards Iran and Bush's towards Iraq in 2002, **that** is what I mean when I say there are substantial similarities between the two time periods.

In fact, that's what I believe is the most significant issue here. It's not surprising that media coverage of this matter is similar (though not identical) to what happened in 2002 with Iraq, given that media organizations and establishment journalists (with some exceptions) never examined what they did wrong in the run-up to the Iraq War and, indeed, don't think they did anything fundamentally wrong. Recall that [David Gregory](#), [Charlie Gibson](#), [Brian Williams](#) and [numerous other establishment journalists](#) all explicitly said that they reject the view that they failed to do their jobs prior to the attack on Iraq. The *NYT* itself, one of the very few outlets to examine its pre-war behavior in any way, issued only the [narrowest and mildest mea culpas](#), while one of that paper's prime culprits, Michael Gordon, to this day [angrily rejects the notion that he did anything wrong](#), and thereafter, long continued to report on "the Iranian threat."

Just look at that original *NYT* article on Iran to see that the principal reporting methods have not changed. The whole article is framed based on claims from the government. The sources are almost all anonymous U.S. government officials. Provocative, unproven claims -- ones that will obviously inflame war passions among a significant segment of the population -- are passed on with no evidence and little questioning. Dissenting voices are excluded (other than a fleeting, token quote from the Iranian President buried in the middle). And overnight, an extremely fear-inciting and sensationalistic case against Iran was cemented as unchallengeable wisdom across the political spectrum. Along with a few other isolated reports, Shane's article today commendably includes some voices raising questions about all of this, but the vast bulk of the coverage from the start has consisted of an unquestioning recitation of the government's case against Iran. The similarities between that behavior and 2002 strike me as both self-evident and, given the lack of institutional remorse in journalism, inevitable.

\* \* \* \* \*

At 12:00 noon EST today, I'll be on Laura Flanders' GRITtv -- along with the superb Jeremy Scahill -- discussing the roles of establishment and independent journalism. Among other places, it can be viewed live on the [front page of FDL](#).

**UPDATE:** One rather odd aspect of Shane's article is this sentence: "Antiwar activists, with a fool-me-once skepticism, watch the dispute over the Qum plant with an alarmed sense of déjà vu." Of course, it wasn't "antiwar activists" who were fooled the first time around; to the contrary, they were insisting that there was no evidence to prove the Bush administration's accusations. The list of people who were actually "fooled" the first time around -- and/or who helped perpetuate the fooling -- begins with Shane's newspaper. And that doesn't seem to have changed much.

Look at this passage from [yesterday's \*NYT\* article](#) by William Broad, Mark Mazzetti, and David Sanger touting the scary prospect of Iran's missile capabilities:

*German intelligence officials take an even harder line against Iran. They say the [nuclear] weapons work never stopped, a judgment made public last year in a German court case involving shipments of banned technology to Tehran.*

But as [Gregg Calstrom amply documents here](#), that claim is highly dubious. As Calstrom wrote to me via email: "Sanger is referencing a German intelligence report on Iran, which was cited in a court case last year (the Vanaki case). But the report was never made public; Sanger obviously hasn't seen it. The trial judge refused to consider it because it was 'too vague.' And the appellate court admitted it wasn't conclusive on the question of whether Iran is developing nuclear weapons. So it only raised the **possibility** that Iran is still developing weapons."

Identically, Oliver Meier -- the international representative and correspondent of the Arms Control Association and a researcher with the Hamburg Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy -- [recently rebutted at length](#) a *Wall St. Journal* Op-Ed claiming -- based on the same German court documents cited by the *NYT* -- that German intelligence "has amassed evidence of a sophisticated Iranian nuclear weapons program that continued beyond 2003" and therefore disproved the 2007 NIE from the U.S. Meier detailed at length why "the information publicly available about the Court's ruling does not support such a broad claim."

Indeed, Germany's foreign intelligence agency (BND) [just recently had to deny claims](#) about its supposedly alarmist views of Iran's nuclear program, insisting:

*But a BND spokesman said the article did not reflect the view of the agency, which is that Iran would not be able to produce an atomic bomb for years.*

*"We are talking about several years not several months," the spokesman said.*

So what we have -- yet again -- is *The New York Times* passing on fear-inciting, war-fueling claims that are at best highly disputed, yet doing so without any nuance, context, investigation or dissent.

Unchecked claims from anonymous "officials" shape virtually every story. And, of course, all of this occurs in the rationality-destroying context in which Saddam's "mushroom cloud" has been replaced by Ahmadinejad's alleged threats to "[wipe Israel off the map](#)."

Contrary to what Shane wrote today, "antiwar activists" aren't operating with "a fool-me-once skepticism" because they weren't fooled the first time. That sentiment ought to be driving *The New York Times'* reporting of this matter, but it plainly isn't.

**UPDATE II:** Speaking of lessons not learned, [here is the pro-Iraq-War Chris Dodd delivering a chest-beating, threatening, belligerent, falsehood-filled rant](#) against Iran on the Senate floor yesterday, in which he praises war-lovers Joe Lieberman and Evan Bayh for their leadership. It really sounds like he's auditioning for a new position as columnist for *The Weekly Standard* (or *The Washington Post*: virtually the same thing). Dodd faces a difficult re-election fight in 2010 and apparently believes such behavior will help in that regard.

Related to all of this: [CBS News blogger Charles Cooper examines](#) the emergence of a "rift" between "liberal hawks" and the rest of the "left" concerning Iran which, he says, is redolent of what happened regarding Iraq in 2002.

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-- **Glenn Greenwald**  
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TUESDAY SEPT. 29, 2009 10:30 EDT

## Talking about Iran on the TV

**(updated below - Update II - Update III)**

Earlier this morning, I was on MSNBC, on Dylan Ratigan's *Morning Meeting* program, discussing Iran. Although I didn't know beforehand, the person charged with making the case that Iran is a Grave Threat was . . . Arianna Huffington. Also on the panel was *Washington Post* Editorial Page writer Jonathan Capehart. Here's what ensued:



Just today, a columnist in Capehart's paper, Richard Cohen, [suggests we may have to attack Iran](#). Over the weekend, another columnist in Capehart's newspaper, David Ignatius, [beat his chest and roared](#): **"It's hard to see how this one will end short of military confrontation if the Iranians don't start bargaining for real."** Last week, Capehart's Editorial Page [published an attack-Iran Op-Ed](#) from two former Senators (one from each party) who have spent the last year advocating [a detailed plan for blockading, attacking, bombing and invading that country](#). The same day, Capehart's boss, Editorial Page Deputy Editor Jackson Diehl, [said that](#) Israel's so-called "success" in its attack on Gaza may/should create the view that "even a partial and short-term reversal of the Iranian nuclear program [via an air attack] may look to Israelis like a reasonable benefit."

And, oh yeah -- we're currently occupying two Muslim countries on either side of Iran, having invaded them many years ago. There's nothing Iran has done that we and our clients/allies haven't [done ourselves to a far greater extent](#). But remember: it's Iran that is run by people with crazy, belligerent, fanatical, war-loving sentiments and is therefore a grave threat to world peace (imagine if Iran had invaded, bombed and then spent the last eight years militarily occupying



Canada and Mexico, only for Iranian media elites to keep insisting that it was the U.S. that was the rogue state run by aggressive fanatics who threatened world peace).

**UPDATE:** [This person](#) points out the irony that -- unbeknownst to me -- the entire time when I was speaking, MSNBC was flashing scary video of Iran testing its missiles (though it omitted video of [this](#) and [this](#)), interspersed with this melodramatic and frightening caption:



It's genuinely hard to overstate the effect of visuals like this, transmitted over and over and over to a population. And that's on the "liberal" MSNBC.

**UPDATE II:** Also worth watching: [Scott Ritter, this morning on Democracy Now](#), discussing the hysteria being generated about Iran.

**UPDATE III:** In *Salon* today, [Juan Cole documents](#) the numerous myths being used to feed hysteria over Iran, and -- [yet again](#) -- debunks the claim that Iran has been threatening a first-strike against Israel.

-- Glenn Greenwald

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MONDAY SEPT. 28, 2009 07:29 EDT

## A glossary of terms in foreign affairs

As we debate the many scary enemies and exciting possibilities for new wars -- escalation in Afghanistan, our [very own "Cuban Missile Crisis"](#) against the Persian Hitlers, the Socialist Menace in Venezuela -- events can become very confusing. Compounding that problem are the many complex, technical terms often used in media discussions of foreign affairs. It's therefore helpful to keep track of the relevant terms --- ones just from the events of the last week alone -- to maximize clarity as we debate our imperial responsibilities:

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[The act of dangerous, threatening Hitlers -- NYT, today:](#)

*Iran was reported Monday to have test-fired long-range missiles capable of striking Israel and American bases in the Persian Gulf in what seemed a show of force.*

[The acts of a peace-loving democracy - Telegraph, January 18, 2008:](#)

*Israel has carried out the successful test launch of a long-range, ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, in what was intended as a clear show of strength to Iran.*

[Washington Post, May 2, 2000:](#)

*An Israeli short-range ballistic missile splashed down in the eastern Mediterranean last month near a U.S. Navy Aegis cruiser, causing momentary fear that the ship was under attack, Defense Department officials said yesterday.*

*The Jericho 1 missile, which can carry nuclear warheads or about 1,000 pounds of chemicals or high explosives, was launched from a missile-testing facility at Yavne, Israel, on April 6 and landed about 40 miles from the*

*USS Anzio, they said. . . [O]ne of the Defense Department officials ... said the repeated "no-notice" launches have made the Pentagon think that the Israelis are trying to prevent the United States from monitoring the tests and acquiring technical data about the operation of the Jericho.*

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[A nation up to no good -- USA Today, last week:](#)

*President Obama said today that Iran has been building a covert nuclear enrichment facility for several years and warned that Tehran would be "held accountable" if it did not immediately demonstrate its peaceful intentions by opening the site to international inspectors.*

...

*The Iranian leader says Iran had informed the IAEA early about the facility. . . . The Iranian leader tells reporters that Iran doesn't have any problems with IAEA inspections of the new facility.*

[A peaceful and law-abiding ally - Foreign Policy, last week:](#)

*The UN nuclear assembly voted on Friday to urge Israel to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and place all atomic sites under UN inspections. . . .*

*This is a major victory as the Israel's representative **on the council has already promised to "not cooperate in any matter with this resolution which is only aiming at reinforcing political hostilities and lines of division in the Middle East region."***

*It also probably won't do a whole lot for the credibility of the IAEA to have one more country over which it is powerless to enforce its rulings.*

---

[A thuggish dictator crushing democracy -- Washington Post, February](#)

16, 2009:

*Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez won a referendum Sunday to eliminate term limits, paving the way for him to rule far into the 21st century to carry out his socialist transformation of this oil-rich country.*

[A criminal Leftist abolishing freedom - National Review, June, 2009:](#)

*But make no mistake: The Honduran soldiers who escorted Pres. Manuel Zelaya from his home on Sunday were acting to protect their country's democracy . . . . Zelaya's ultimate goal was to extend or abolish presidential term limits, mimicking the example of Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez and other Latin American populists.*

[A stalwart reformer devoted to democratic values -- CSM, September 2, 2009:](#)

*Colombian lawmakers voted Tuesday to call a referendum on whether conservative President Álvaro Uribe – a key US ally in a region now dominated by leftist leaders – should be allowed to seek a third straight term in office. . . .*

*But the vote, which has been dogged by allegations of irregularities, has angered critics and even some of Uribe's staunchest allies. They worry that if Uribe wins a third term, it could endanger Colombian democracy in the same way that many of the region's leftist leaders have done in recent years.*

[Democracy in action -- Bloomberg, last year:](#)

*New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg said he would seek re-election next year and is working with the City Council to amend a 15-year-old law limiting elected officials to two terms, as the Wall Street slump imperils the city's economy. . . .*

*Bloomberg, the billionaire founder and majority owner*

*of Bloomberg News parent Bloomberg LP, ran for mayor in 2001 and 2005 as a Republican, after having been a lifelong Democrat, spending about \$158 million on both races combined.*

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[A thuggish dictator crushing dissent - Associated Press, two weeks ago:](#)

*The government said Monday a leading TV channel aligned with Venezuela's opposition could lose its broadcast license for allegedly airing a viewer's text message calling for a coup and the assassination of President Hugo Chavez.*

[Responsible leaders defending freedom and the rule of law -- Guardian, today:](#)

*Honduras's interim leaders suspended key civil liberties last night in response to "calls for insurrection" by ousted president Manuel Zelaya, empowering police and soldiers to break up "unauthorised" public meetings, arrest people without warrants and restrict the news media.*

---

[A conspiracy of aggressors -- Fox News, December, 2007:](#)

*Russia is selling Iran a new and sophisticated air defense system that experts say is capable of dealing a serious blow against would-be attackers.*

*The new S-300 air defense system signals growing military cooperation between Moscow and Tehran*

[A nations that merely wants peace -- NYT, September 9, 2009:](#)

*Despite a recession that knocked down global arms sales last year, the United States expanded its role as the world's leading weapons supplier . . . The United States signed weapons agreements valued at \$37.8 billion in 2008, or **68.4 percent of all business in the global***

**arms bazaar**, up significantly from American sales of \$25.4 billion the year before.

*Italy was a distant second, with \$3.7 billion in worldwide weapons sales in 2008, while Russia was third with \$3.5 billion in arms sales last year . . . The United States was the leader not only in arms sales worldwide, but also in sales to nations in the developing world, signing \$29.6 billion in weapons agreements with these nations, or **70.1 percent of all such deals**.*

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State sponsors of Terrorism -- BBC, November, 2006:

*A senior Hezbollah official has told the BBC that Iran is providing the group with money to help fund its reconstruction activities in Lebanon. . . .*

*Lebanon's Finance Minister, Jihad Azour, also acknowledged that Iranian money is going directly to Hezbollah.*

Peace-loving nations -- *Irish Times*, February 23, 2009:

*DETAILED EVIDENCE has emerged of Israel's extensive use of US-made weaponry during its war in Gaza last month, including white phosphorus artillery shells, 500lb bombs and Hellfire missiles.*

NYT, July, 2006:

*The Bush administration is rushing a delivery of precision-guided bombs to Israel, which requested the expedited shipment last week after beginning its air campaign against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, American officials said Friday.*

*The decision to quickly ship the weapons to Israel was made with relatively little debate within the Bush administration, the officials said. Its disclosure threatens to anger Arab governments and others*

*because of the appearance that the United States is actively aiding the Israeli bombing campaign in a way that could be compared to Iran's efforts to arm and resupply Hezbollah.*

[BBC, March 21, 2003:](#)

*The long-awaited move began on the third night of the war, with US cruise missiles and carrier aircraft precision bombs raining down on Baghdad and other major cities. . . . The doctrine of "shock and awe" is based on a book by military strategist Harlan Ullman, who is admired by both Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell.*

*Mr Ullman wrote that the use of air power to achieve "nearly incomprehensible levels of mass destruction" could achieve "an overwhelming level of shock and awe against an adversary on an immediate basis to paralyse its will to resist".*

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[Monsters with contempt for their own people - WashPost, June, 2009:](#)

*Mir Hossein Mousavi, the leading opposition candidate in last month's disputed election, released documents Saturday detailing a campaign of alleged fraud by supporters of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that assured his reelection.*

[Freedom Is On The March -- CNN, last week:](#)

*Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Thursday warned Western observers not to "delegitimize" the results of his country's presidential election, which has been marred by allegations of fraud.*

*Results of the completed count, announced Wednesday, gave Karzai 54 percent of the vote in the August 20 poll, but the numbers won't be certified until authorities investigate allegations of irregularities. More than*

*200,000 of the nearly 5.7 million votes cast have been thrown out, including 29,000 in a swath of Afghanistan where Karzai has strong support, and European Union observers have raised questions about 1.5 million more.*

[Liberating a nation -- Economist, September, 2009:](#)

*The Shia-led government has overseen a ballooning of the country's security apparatus. Human-rights violations are becoming more common. In private many Iraqis, especially educated ones, are asking if their country may go back to being a police state.*

*Old habits from Saddam Hussein's era are becoming familiar again. Torture is routine in government detention centres. "Things are bad and getting worse, even by regional standards," says Samer Muscati, who works for Human Rights Watch, a New York-based lobby.*

*His outfit reports that, with American oversight gone (albeit that the Americans committed their own shameful abuses in such places as Abu Ghraib prison), Iraqi police and security people are again pulling out fingernails and beating detainees, even those who have already made confessions. A limping former prison inmate tells how he realised, after a bout of torture in a government ministry that lasted for five days, that he had been relatively lucky. When he was reunited with fellow prisoners, he said he saw that many had lost limbs and organs.*

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[A rogue nation showing contempt for international law -- NPR, this week:](#)

*In a dramatic joint statement, Obama — flanked by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy — said the existence of the site "deepens a growing concern" that Iran has failed to live*



*up to its international obligations to fully disclose its nuclear ambitions. Obama said Iran "is breaking rules that all nations must follow. . . ."*

Honoring treaty obligations -- David Cole, *New York Review of Books*, this week:

*The United States is **legally bound** by the Convention Against Torture to submit any case alleging torture by a person within its jurisdiction "to its competent authorities for the purpose of prosecution." President Obama and Attorney General Holder have both stated that waterboarding is torture. Accordingly, the United States is legally obligated to investigate not merely those CIA interrogators who went beyond waterboarding, but the lawyers and Cabinet officers who authorized waterboarding and other torture tactics in the first place. . . . Absent a reckoning for those responsible for making torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment official US policy, the United States' commitment to the rule of law will remain a hollow shell -- a commitment to be honored only when it is not inconvenient or impolitic to do so.*

Article 2, U.N. Charter:

*All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.*

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Once those terms are systematically laid out in glossary form like this, everything becomes much clearer. Perhaps the ultimate confusion is that "the Left" has long been accused of "moral relativism" for pointing out the use of these terms when the [essence of "moral relativism"](#) is judging an act not based on what it is, but on who is doing it. It's the adolescent self-love of believing that "X, by definition, is good when I do it and bad when you do it."

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Wednesday, Sep 23, 2009 17:24 EDT

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What accounts for the growing confusion over where Beck and the protest movement fall on the political spectrum?

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