Putin warns against missile deployment near Russia

President Barack Obama

The Obama administration has devoted enormous attention and effort to a worldwide campaign to destabilize Iran and open the way to direct military aggression, the latest mass of documents released by WikiLeaks confirms. The first batch of more than 250,000 secret diplomatic cables between the State Department and 270 US embassies and missions around the world were made public Sunday night by the Internet-based organization, which is opposed to US militarism.

The documents reveal a wide range of efforts by the US government over the past decade, and especially in the last three years, to mobilize support for its campaign against Iran—as well as to forestall a premature Israeli strike against the Islamic Republic, which US officials feared would be counterproductive and strengthen Iran in the long run.

The most provocative allegation contained in the documents is the claim, in a February 28, 2010 cable describing a US-Russian meeting, that North Korea had shipped Iran 19 medium-range, Russian-designed missiles, capable of delivering nuclear warheads. This claim was trumped in US media accounts of the WikiLeaks documents, as though it was a smoking gun, but it amounts to no more than an unsupported US government allegation, similar to lies used by the Bush administration to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The New York Times devoted a lengthy article to the claim of a “cache” of missiles which it said would give Iran the ability to strike cities 2,000 miles away: “If fired from Iran, that range, in theory, would let its warheads reach targets as far away as Western Europe, including Berlin. If fired north-westward, the warheads could easily reach Moscow.”

The Times account was crafted in collaboration with the Obama administration—as the newspaper’s editors shamelessly admit, explaining: “At the request of the Obama administration, The New York Times has agreed not to publish the text of the cable.”

The WikiLeaks documents also demonstrate that US embassies throughout the Middle East and Central Asia were instructed to focus their espionage activities on Iran, particularly in those countries with a common border. This was necessary because there has been no official US presence in Tehran since the 1979 takeover by militant students, who branded the embassy—with perfect justice—as a “nest of spies.”

Washington pursued a course of heavy-handed diplomatic pressure on countries with important economic relations with Tehran, particularly China, Russia and Germany. The Bush administration intervened with China in November 2007, seeking to intercept a cargo of missile stimulators en route from North Korea to Iran via Beijing, one of at least a dozen such diplomatic exchanges targeting cargo ranging from carbon fiber to gyroscopes to ordinary chemicals.

Particularly significant are those countries with a common border. All of the crowned monarchs of Saudi Arabia and other Arab sheikdoms for example, were alarmed by the prospect. At the request of its military, China, Russia and Germany.

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Military experts can do it, Putin said. "Military experts can do it," he said. "Military experts can do it, the US military cannot do it."