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Could Bush Start Another War?

by Scott Horton

"If the king attacks Persia, he will destroy a great empire." – Delphic Oracle

All the news is that despite growing antiwar sentiment among the public and the establishment, Bush has decided to **reject** the major recommendations of the Baker panel and continue to settle for nothing less than total "victory" in Iraq, that he has turned back to the dark heart of the War Party, the **American Enterprise Institute**, for a plan to win and that more **troops** and **ships** are headed to the region.

Everyone outside AEI seems to agree that the chances for his "victory" of a multiethnic, America-friendly, democratic Iraqi state have long since expired. The Baker panel avoided using the term at all. And as investigative reporter Robert Dreyfuss **explained** to me last week, the US is **backing** the **Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq** (SCIRI) death squad leaders because they are the only ones (besides some of the Kurds in the autonomous North) who want – need – the US to stay. This is hardly the "road to victory" as it has been defined by the President.

But Bush can't stop now. He figures his legacy as a disgrace to America and all mankind can be postponed or perhaps somehow even reversed if he could have just a little more time.

Time for what? Could it be that Bush truly intends to carry out the full **neoconservative program** in the Middle East, complete with more regime changes?

Could spreading his most spectacular failure to Iran and Syria make Iraq seem merely a "**catastrophic success**"? Are even Bush and Cheney stupid enough to think **an air war** against Iran will accomplish anything other than forcing their withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, pushing their **rebellious populace** back into the arms of the Mullahs, driving the price of oil over \$200 a barrel and beginning a brand new war in Iraq against the Iran-friendly Shia whom the U.S. has spent hundreds of thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars installing in power?

Could Bush, whose approval ratings remain in the **30s**, initiate an aggressive war without authorization from Congress? Could he claim that the **authorization** for the war in Iraq was all the authority he needed?

Scott Ritter and Seymour Hersh seem to think so. On December 14th **Democracy Now!** replayed the audio of their October 16, 2006 appearance at the **Ethical Culture Society**.

They emphasize the role of the communist cult **Mujahideen-e-Khalq** – once Saddam's loyal terrorists, now "ours" – in the early stages of war against Iran and the **then-recent** – and now recent again – news of U.S. Navy ships, including minesweepers, being sent to the Persian Gulf region. Ritter also explained that the American people have **already accepted** Bush's false premise that Iran has a nuclear weapons program and that the U.S. must not allow it to be successful.

But as Hersh reported in the *New Yorker's* **November issue**, the CIA's new National Intelligence Estimate on Iran says that *they have no evidence at all* of a secret weapons program. Indeed, the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA), which has had full access to Iran's nuclear program, has reported all along that there is "no indication" that Iran has diverted nuclear technology to any other purpose beyond their declared and monitored electricity program, a program which they have an "inalienable right" to under the NPT.

According to Ritter and Hersh, the Israelis don't have any more evidence than the U.S. does, and *it does not matter*. In the eyes of right-wing Likudnik crazies like **Benjamin Netanyahu** and his **ex-communist, Israel-First, neocon buddies in the U.S.**, any nuclear technology in the hands of the Iranians is tantamount to a ready capacity to "wipe Israel off the map." The fact that the ability to enrich uranium to the grade required to generate electricity (around 3.6% U-235) **does not equal** the ability to enrich it to weapons grade (well over 90% U-235) – especially in the presence of IAEA inspectors and video equipment – is irrelevant to them.

It has been reported, first by **Philip Giraldi**, then by **Hersh, Larisa Alexandrovna** and **Col. Sam Gardiner** (ret.), that Bush has considered using real nukes on Iran's pretend ones. While it seems inconceivable, Iran's Natanz facility is buried deep underground, and we know how concerned Bush is with getting things right the first time.

It seems the only way he can imagine to take one last shot at greatness is to compound his mistake by 1,000 times.

Perhaps the question is whether Israel will start a war in Syria as a back door to the expansion of America's war to Iran, or will the U.S. simply **fake another Gulf of Tonkin** provocation in the Indian Ocean and hit Syria second?

Even if Iran did have nuclear weapons, it would still be none of America's business. They do not have the rocket technology to deliver them here, nor would they be likely to share their prize with terrorists. Nuclear bombs all come with a "**return address**." And let's not forget that back in 2003, they offered to give the US **everything**.

Israel has at least 400 nuclear bombs, a fully capable conventional military and can protect itself just fine. They don't need the U.S. for their defense, but for aggression against threats that do not really exist.

Even Robert Gates, our new secretary of "defense" admitted to Congress that the only reason Iran would want a nuke is that they are **surrounded by powers with nukes**.

Robert Parry **reports** that Bush, Blair and Olmert are already planning for more war in the new year. The Iranians seem to have waited too long to get their act together. If they had withdrawn from the NPT and started harvesting plutonium the way North Korea did, instead of throwing their books wide open to the UN and trying to go along, they'd have a nuclear deterrent by now.

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