

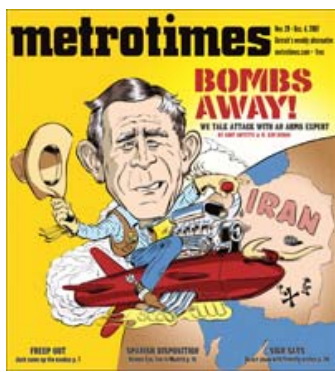
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Bombs away?

Arms expert Scott Ritter says the U.S. plans to attack Iran. MT asks why he's so sure.

by **Curt Guyette and W. Kim Heron**
11/28/2007

"Everything points to April 2008 to being a month of some criticality."



Scott Ritter



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MORE FROM CURT GUYETTE AND W. KIM HERON

It seems that with each passing week there are more stories raising the specter of George Bush turning Iraq and Afghanistan into a bloody trifecta by attacking Iran.

In mainstream daily papers we see pieces like one by Gannett's John Yaukey, who wrote in early November that "confrontation could be near" because "Iran continues to taunt the United States with its aggressive posturing in Iraq and Lebanon while pushing ahead with its nuclear research ..."

We are also witnessing what appears to be a chilling rerun of the Iraq debacle. Confronted with evidence that calls into question the status of Iran's nuclear program, the Bush administration is shifting its rhetoric.

"The Bush administration has charged that Iran is funding anti-American fighters in Iraq and sending in sophisticated explosives to bleed the U.S. mission, although some of the administration's charges are disputed by Iraqis as well as the Iranians," the *Los Angeles Times* reported in October. "Still, ... diplomatic and military officials say they fear that the overreaching of a confident Iran, combined with growing U.S. frustrations, could set off a dangerous collision."

Look beyond daily papers — from Seymour Hersh's reporting in *The New Yorker* to articles in *The Nation* — and the picture emerges of an administration that is determined to attack Iran.

John H. Richardson's "The Secret History of the Impending War With Iran That the White House Doesn't Want You to Know" in the November issue of *Esquire* magazine is particularly eye-opening. Richardson, using two former high-ranking Middle East experts who worked for the White House as his primary sources, warns that the Bush administration is "headed straight for war with Iran" and that "it had been set on this course for years."

"It was just like Iraq, when the White House was so eager for war it couldn't wait for the UN inspectors to leave," writes Richardson, who details the Bush administration's success at scuttling diplomatic efforts — notably involving then-Secretary of State Colin Powell — to reach a peaceful accord with Iran. "The steps have been many and steady and all in the same direction. And now things are getting much worse. We are getting closer and closer to the tripline. ..."

With all this in mind, we decided to talk with the man who literally wrote the book on Bush's intentions. Nearly a year ago, Scott Ritter's *Target Iran* was published, and he's been sounding the claxon of impending war ever since.

A former Marine Corps intelligence officer, Ritter served as chief United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998 when he left as a pointed critic of the Clinton administration's commitment to weapons inspection and its Iraq policy. Before the United States' 2003 invasion, Ritter loudly disputed the Bush administration's claims regarding weapons of mass destruction under Saddam's control and predicted that, instead of the quick and easy war being promised, Iraq would turn into a quagmire, though not necessarily of the type he envisioned. His analyses have been embraced by both the right and the left at various points. He portrays himself as the straight-shooting analyst unconcerned by who supports him or whom he offends.

To learn what he thinks the future holds for Iran, and the consequences of a U.S. invasion, we recently sat down for a 90-minute phone interview with Ritter. What follows is a condensed version of that conversation.

Metro Times: A year ago, when your book *Target Iran* came out, you were sounding the alarm about war being imminent. Why do you think that attack hasn't occurred?

Scott Ritter: Let's remember that this is an elective war, not a war of necessity. A war of necessity would be fought at the point and time a conflict is required, if somebody is threatening to invade you, to attack, etc. But an elective war is one where we choose to go to war. It will be conducted on a timescale that's beneficial to those who are planning the conflict.

As far as why it hasn't happened, there's any number of reasons. One, the Bush


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administration has not been able to stabilize Iraq to the level they would like to see prior to expanding military operations in the region. Two, the international community has not rallied around the cause of Iran's nuclear program representing a casus belli to the extent that the Bush administration would like. They were hopeful that there would be more action from the [United Nations] Security Council. It took a long time to get the issue shifted from the International Atomic Energy Agency's headquarters to the Security Council. And even when it got shifted to the Security Council, the Council took very timid steps, not decisive steps. The Bush administration sort of tied its hands at that point in time. I think you are seeing increasing frustration today at the slow pace.

Also, the need to redefine the Iranian threat away from exclusively being focused on nuclear activity, because now you have the difficulty of both the IAEA saying there is no nuclear weapons program and the CIA saying pretty much the same thing. So the Bush administration needs to redefine the Iranian threat, which they have been doing successfully, casting Iran as the largest state sponsor of terror, getting the Senate resolution calling the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Command a terrorist organization, and creating a perception amongst the American people, courtesy of a compliant media, that talks about the reason why things are going bad in Iraq is primarily because of Iranian intervention.

They have been working very hard to get back on track. I still believe that we are seeing convergence here. The Bush administration is moving very aggressively toward military action with Iran.

MT: Is your conclusion that an attack is imminent based on the administration's statements and actions, like labeling Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist group, or do you also have sources within the intelligence community and the military and the administration telling you what's going on?

Ritter: I don't have any current sources of the sort you just spoke of. I was plugged in back in 2006 to good quality current information. But I haven't been plugged in recently, so I have to use some sort of analytical methodology as opposed to saying, "Aha, I got it from the horse's mouth." But there's nothing that has occurred that leads me to believe the Bush administration has changed its policy direction. In fact there has been much that's occurred that reinforces the earlier conclusions that were based on good sources of information. We take a look at items in the defense budget, the rapid conversion of heavy bombers to carry bunker-busting bombs on a specific time frame, the massive purchasing of oil to fill up the strategic oil reserve by April 2008. Everything points to April 2008 to being a month of some criticality. It also matches my analysis that the Bush administration will want to carry this out prior to the crazy political season of the summer of 2008.

MT: Last year you expressed hope that if Democrats took control of Congress it might pass legislation that could block the march toward war. Do you see them stepping up?

Ritter: No. They just passed a resolution declaring the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Command as a terrorist organization. Unless there is a radical reawakening in Congress, I don't see them passing any sort of pre-emptive legislation of that nature.

MT: But it is now clearer than ever that our invasion of Iraq has been a disaster. How do you explain the lack of opposition?

Ritter: It's difficult to explain. First of all you have to note, from the public side, that very few Americans actually function as citizens anymore. What I mean by that are people who invest themselves in this country, people who care, who give a damn. Americans are primarily consumers today, and so long as they continue to wrap themselves in the cocoon of comfort, and the system keeps them walking down a road to the perceived path of prosperity, they don't want to rock the boat. If it doesn't have a direct impact on their day-to-day existence, they simply don't care.

There's a minority of people who do, but the majority of Americans don't. And if the people don't care — and remember, the people are the constituents — if the constituents don't care, then those they elect to higher office won't feel the pressure to change.

The Democrats, one would hope, would live up to their rhetoric, that is, challenging the Bush administration's imperial aspirations. Once it became clear Iraq was an unmitigated disaster, one would have thought that when the Democrats took control of Congress they would have sought to reimpose a system of checks and balances, as the Constitution mandates. But instead the Democrats have put their focus solely on recapturing the White House, and, in doing so, will not do anything that creates a political window of opportunity for their Republican opponents.

The Democrats don't want to be explaining to an apathetic constituency, an ignorant constituency whose ignorance is prone to be exploited because it produces fear, fear of the unknown, and the global war on terror is the ultimate fear button. The Democrats, rather than challenging the Bush administration's position on the global war on terror, challenging the notion of these imminent threats, continues to play them up because that is the safest route toward the White House. At least that is their perception.

The last thing they are going to do is pass a piece of legislation that opens the door for the

Republicans to say, "Look how weak these guys are on terror. They're actually defending the Iranians. They're defending this Ahmadinejad guy. They're defending the Holocaust denier. They're defending the guy who wants to wipe Israel off the face of the earth." The Democrats don't want to go up against that. They don't have the courage of conviction to enter into that debate and stare at whoever makes that statement and say they're a bald-faced liar. They're not going to go that route.

MT: Do you think there is anything that can happen at this point that will stop this attack?

Ritter: You have to take a look at external influences, not internal ones. I don't think there is anything happening inside the United States that's going to stop that attack. I do believe that, for instance, if Pakistan continues to melt down, that could be something that creates such a significant diversion the Bush administration will not be able to make its move on Iran.

To attack Iran, they're going to need a nice lull period. That's what they're pushing with this whole surge right now. They're creating the perception that things are quieting. I don't know how many people picked up on it, but one day we're told that 2007's been the bloodiest year for U.S. forces in Iraq, the next day we're told that attacks against American troops are dropping at a dramatic pace. So, what's the media focus on? The concept of attacks dropping at a dramatic pace. No one's talking about the fact, wait a minute, we've just lost more guys than we've ever lost before.

They are pushing the perception that Iraq is now stable. If you have a situation in Pakistan that explodes out of control, where you suddenly have nuclear weapons at risk of falling into the hands of Islamic fundamentalists, that could stop it. If Turkey attacks Kurdistan and that conflict spins out of control, that could put a halt to it. These are things that could overshadow even Dick Cheney's desire to bomb Iran.

And there could be some other unforeseen meltdown globally that's not on the radar at this time, that, unfortunately, we have to be hoping for to stop an attack on Iran. And that says a lot, that we have to hope for disaster to prevent unmitigated disaster.

MT: What's the motivation?

Ritter: The ideologues who are in there believe the United States in the post-Cold War environment needed to fill the gap created by the demise of the Soviet Union so that no nation or group of nations would ever again confront us as equals. And in order to do this, they basically divided the world into spheres of strategic interest and said we will impose our will. And the Middle East is one such area. There's a whole host of reasons to do this.

It's not just supporting Israel. It's not just taking down Saddam. It's about geopolitics. It's about looking down the road toward China and India, the world's two largest developing economies, especially the Chinese, and the absolute fear that this resurgent Chinese economy brings in the hearts of American industrialists and the need to dictate the pace of Chinese economic development by controlling their access to energy. And controlling central Asian and Middle East energy areas is key in the strategic thinking of the Bush administration.

So, there's a lot of complexity at play here. But you say why do they want to do this? It's about as Condoleezza Rice continuously says before the U.S. Congress: It's about regional transformation, inclusive of regime change. It turns the Middle East into a sphere of interest that we have tremendous control over. That's what's behind all this.

MT: And when Bush talks about being an instrument of God, do you think he really believes that or is that just political posturing, playing to the religious base?

Ritter: That's a question that can only be asked of George Bush. But I find it disturbing that an American politician who is supposed to be the head of a secular nation where religion is protected but there is no state religion, and who has control over the world's largest nuclear arsenal, not only openly talks about how God is his final adviser, which pretty much negates the role of Congress or any other system of governmental oversight, checks and balances of the executive, but also embraces a kind of evangelicalism that gives legitimacy to the notion of the rapture, Armageddon, the apocalypse as a good thing.

Here's a man who speaks of World War III and the apocalypse and he has his hand on the button and he talks to God. I don't know, if it's a show, it's a dangerous show, if it's real, we should all be scared to death.

MT: Even going back to before the start of the Iraq war, the national mainstream media just seemed to be beating the drum for it. Why do you think that is?

Ritter: Again, only they can really answer that question, but I think it is clear the mainstream media, while not outright fabricators, are not there to tell the truth, they're there to win over ratings. They will package their programming in ways that sells well to an audience. And we are dealing with a complacent American audience, where in-depth reality stories are trumped by reality TV. I don't see the programming director saying, "Look, we're going to spend an hour explaining to the American people why Ahmadinejad's speech wasn't that big of a deal."

Or they can say, "Hell, no; in three minutes we can lead with a story saying he's a Holocaust denier and win everybody's attention."

MT: Do you think the resolutions in 2001 and 2002 authorizing Bush to use military force against Iraq give Bush the authority to attack Iran without first obtaining congressional approval?

Ritter: I'd like to believe it didn't, but unfortunately when you take a look at it, and I've had constitutional scholars take a look at it, the feeling is that, yeah, because of the terrorist threat, if you take a look at the fine print on both of those resolutions, it gives the president authorization to use military force to take out groups, organizations, individuals, etc. who are linked to the events of 9/11. And the president has continued to make the case that Iran is linked to the attacks.

MT: Do you think an attack on Iran would be an illegal war of aggression and a war crime under international law?

Ritter: It depends on what triggers it. If Iran engages in an action that legitimizes a military response, the answer is no.

There are two conditions that we are legally allowed to engage in military operations. Militaries are bound by the charter of the United Nations' Article 51, legitimate self-defense, and a Chapter 7 resolution passed by the Security Council authorizing military force to be used. If we attack Iran void of any of these, especially when it can be shown that we have hyped up a threat in defense of pre-emption — I think the Nuremberg Tribunals from 1946 have set a clear precedent with Judge Jackson condemning German generals to death for invading Denmark and Norway in the same premise of pre-emption. It is quite clear this is illegal. Unfortunately the Nuremberg Tribunals don't have any weight when it comes to prosecution of the law.

The international community has not agreed upon a definition of what pre-emptive aggression is, and what the consequences of such are. Let's keep in mind if we attack Iran we're guilty of no more than what we're already guilty of in attacking Iraq. Hying up a threat where one doesn't exist, going to war void of any legitimacy, violating everything we claim to stand for. Yet we don't see any war crimes tribunals being convened for the Bush administration over Iraq.

MT: One of the scenarios that's been raised has Israel launching the first strike, prompting a response from Iran that would then pull us in.

Ritter: I think Israel is capable of doing a one-time limited shot into Iran. One has to take a look at the distances involved and the complexity of military operations ... the lack of friendly airspace between corridors into and out of Iran. It's nice to talk about an Israeli attack, but the reality is far different. Israel had trouble dominating Hezbollah right on its own border with air power.

I think Israel could actually go into Iran and get their butts kicked. It may not go off as well as they think it's going to go off. It is too long of a distance, too much warning for the Iranians. The Iranians are too locked-in; they're too well prepared. It doesn't make any sense. Israel doesn't have the ability to sustain a strike. Like I said, they might be able to pull off a limited one-time shot. But I think the fallout from that would be devastating for the United States. As much as we've worked to get an Arab alliance against Iran, that would just fall apart overnight with an Israeli attack. No Muslim state will stand by and defend Israel after it initiated a strike against Iran. It just will not happen. And the United States knows this. I just think it's ludicrous to talk about an Israeli attack.

I think what we're looking at is an American attack. It's the only viable option both in terms of initiation and sustainment of the strike. Israel might be drawn in after that. There's no doubt in my mind the Iranians will launch missiles against Israeli targets, either directly or through proxies, and that Israel will suffer. This is something I try to warn all my Israeli friends about. If you think Saddam Hussein firing 41 missiles was inconvenient, wait until the Iranians fire a thousand of them. It goes well beyond an inconvenience; it becomes a national tragedy. And then the escalation that can occur from there.

I think right now what the Bush administration is conceiving is a limited strike against Iran to take out certain Revolutionary Guard sites and perhaps identified nuclear infrastructure. Not a massive, sustained bombardment, but a limited strike. But we were always told in the Marine Corps that the enemy has a vote and no plan survives initial contact with the enemy. So we may seek to have a limited strike, but if the Iranians do a massive response, things could spin out of control quickly.

MT: What do you foresee as some of the possible consequences? No one is talking about putting troops on the ground in Iran are they?

Ritter: A while back there was talk about having forces move in on Tehran via Azerbaijan. But I think those plans have gone to the wayside. If Iran is successful in shutting down the Straits of Hormuz, it will force our hand and we'll have to put the Marines in to secure the

Straits. If the conflict drags on and air power is not sufficient to break the will of the Iranian resistance, the Army may have to activate its option to put a reinforced corps into Azerbaijan and punch down the Caspian Sea coast. But these are definitely not the leading options at this point in time.

MT: When you say a "limited strike," what might that look like in more detail?

Ritter: Iran is a big country. There are a number of target sites we have to look at. To give an example, to take out a number of air defense sites during the Gulf War, a sortie required over 100 aircraft. It's not just one airplane coming in, firing a missile and going out. You have to secure a corridor, you have to put a combat air patrol over it, you have to have air-to-air refueling, you have to have aircraft protecting the refuelers, and then you have to have the strike aircraft themselves. You have to have pre- and post-reconnaissance. When you replicate this, let's say, over 20 targets, we don't have enough airplanes to do it all at once. So, it's something that will occur in phases. What you look at is maybe a three- to five-day bombardment where we take out sites, radar sites and air defense sites the first day, the second we pound the nuclear sites, the third day we take the Revolutionary Guard Command sites, the fourth and fifth days we do follow-up strikes to make sure all targets are destroyed, then we're done. That's probably what we're looking at.

MT: How much damage could be done to the Iranian nuclear program?

Ritter: No damage would be done to it. Remember, the problem the Iranians face isn't the manufacture of this equipment. They've already mastered that. And if you think for a second machine tools that are used to manufacture enrichment equipment are going to be stored out in the open where we can bomb them, you're wrong. They've been dispersed. The Iraqis were masters of this. We spent a lot of money blowing up concrete, but we never got the machine tools, because they were always hidden. They were always evacuated the day before — they'd take it to palm groves or warehouses that we didn't know about, or hidden in narrow streets. And we never detected that, and we never got them. The Iranians are even better. They've been mastering the technology of deep-earth tunneling, so they can hide things underground that we can't reach with our conventional weapons. So I just think it is absurd to talk about bombing these sites, because all we'll do is blow up buildings that can be rebuilt.

A couple of sites are more sensitive; I think the uranium conversion facility at Isfahan, that'll be a major blow. It's a site that can be rebuilt however. It was a facility put in by the Chinese, but the Iranians have the blueprints. It'll take time, but they can rebuild it. At the best we are talking about retarding an Iranian program. But what's worse is if we bomb them, we may retard it, but we might also make it a militant program. Meaning that if their objective is only nuclear energy and suddenly they're being attacked and the world is doing nothing, we may push the Iranians into weaponization even though that is something they don't want to do. That's not in the cards right now. But our attack will have little or no impact on anything. That's for certain.

MT: So what do you think the United States should be doing to keep Iran from getting nuclear weapons?

Ritter: I think that is the wrong question. That presumes Iran is seeking nuclear weapons. There's no evidence of that whatsoever. So rather than pose a question that legitimizes a certain point, I think the question should be, "What should the United States be doing in regards to Iran?" I think we should be seeking to normalize relations with Iran. We should be seeking stability in the region. This concept that the United States gets to dictate to sovereign people the makeup of their government is absurd. First of all, the theocracy in Iran, while not a model, for instance ... it's an Iranian problem, not an American problem. The day of the exportation of the Islamic revolution is long gone. The Iranians are not seeking to convert by the sword anybody. It's a nation that has serious internal problems. Economic. Huge unemployment. It's a nation that recognizes these problems. And they are in desperate need of not only political stability but also the economic benefits that come with this stability.

The Iranians want a normalization of relations with the United States that would be inclusive of peaceful coexistence with Israel. They've said this over and over and over again.

So what the United States should be doing is exploiting the olive branch that is being held out by the Iranians. We should be engaging them diplomatically. We should be terminating economic sanctions and seeking to exploit the leverage that comes with having American businesses working inside Iran to try and change them from within. We should be doing everything to get Iran to be a positive player in the region, especially considering the debacle that's unfolding in Iraq. Having the Iranians working with us to engender stability as opposed to being at cross-purposes.

The same can be said in Afghanistan and the entire central Asian region. We keep putting our hopes on allies like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Saudi Arabia, which produced 14 of the hijackers who slaughtered Americans on 9/11. Pakistan, which was the political sponsor of the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and continues to have ties to radical Islamic terror organizations. These are our allies? And we call Iran the enemy? We've got it backward. The Iranians are actually the ones we should be working with to oppose dictatorships like Pakistan and irresponsible governments like Saudi Arabia's.

MT: Even under Iran's current president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? It seems like before him, just after 2001, there was a window where the Iranians were seeking rapprochement and doing things perhaps quietly and not well-known to Americans to stabilize things.

Ritter: You have to remember that Ahmadinejad doesn't make any policy. He is more than a figurehead, but constitutionally he's hampered by the reality that the power resides with the theocrats. It's the theocrats we need to be engaging, not Ahmadinejad. You engage the people who make the decisions. In the end we should be sending people to talk to the National Security Council, the Guardian Council, the representatives of the supreme leader. That's where the power is, that's where the decisions are made. Ahmadinejad is in reality just a minor inconvenience. The bottom line is, not only doesn't he account for much, his words haven't created a problem at all. Half the things we claim he said, he never said at all. And the other half we put out of context and exaggerate.

I'm not here to defend what the guy says. But the notion that just because a man dared question a 100 percent interpretation of the history of the Holocaust as put forward by Israel — and again, I'm not saying he's right to do that — I'm just saying that because he dared do that, he's suddenly evil incarnate and we need to go to war against this guy? No. At worst he's a joke. He's a guy whose words mean nothing, have no power, have no relevance. It's the supreme leader that matters. And, yes, today the supreme leader continues to want to seek to normalize relations with the United States.

MT: You are getting ready to go to Iran at the start of December. What's the purpose of that trip?

Ritter: I've been trying to get there for some time now to talk with Iranian government officials trying to ascertain firsthand what's going on in Iran. We get a lot of rhetoric here at home, we get the media saying a lot of things that are derived not so much from on-the-ground truth in Iran but rather from talking points put out by the White House. I think it is imperative that if we are going to have a national debate, discussion and dialogue about Iran, that we get all sides of the story.

Hopefully, I'll have an opportunity to meet with Iranian government officials, and have a chance to speak with some religious officials, and maybe even have a chance to talk about hypotheticals, not only what the current situation is, but how the Iranians would like to see this thing resolved and what mechanisms might need to be employed and maybe come back with some ideas that people in Congress might be interested in.

MT: You've been to Iran before, haven't you?

Ritter: Yes. And having been to Iran, I can tell you that it is the last nation in the world we should be saying these are people we have to fight. When you visit Iran and you see the Iranian people and you get the chance to talk to them, you realize that these are peaceful people. These are highly educated people. They are more like us than we can possibly imagine. They are very Western in their approach, although they reject the term Western because they say think those in the West are Neanderthals compared to the Persian culture. But they are very modern in their approach. They are a very modern people.

I always say the best way to stop a war with Iran would be to issue every American a passport and roundtrip ticket and money for a two-week stay and let them go there and when they came back they'd say there's no way we should bomb this place. Once you've been to Iran you realize just how utterly useless the concept of militaristic confrontation is.

MT: I think it is fair to say you are perceived as a champion of the left at this point. But 10 years ago, when you were criticizing the Clinton administration for undermining efforts to root out Saddam's weapons, you were being heralded by the right. Saddam accused you of being an American spy. And you were criticized for being too close with the Israelis and sharing information with them. But when you go to Iraq prior to the war there, people on the right are calling you a traitor. The FBI put you under surveillance. What do you make of all that?

Ritter: What I make of it is my consistency and the inconsistency of those who seek to gain political advantage by manipulating the truth. When the right embraced what I was saying, they didn't embrace the totality of what I was saying. They only embraced that aspect that was convenient for their political purposes. I would say today that the left is guilty of the same thing. I'm only convenient to the left when that which I espouse mirrors what they are pursuing. It will be interesting to see, if Hillary Clinton wins the White House, how popular I will be in certain circles, because I can guarantee I will go after her with all the vengeance I go after the Bush administration.

It's not about being Republican, it's not about being Democrat, it's about being American. It's about doing the right thing. And in the 1990s the right thing was to implement the [United Nations] Security Council resolutions calling for the disarmament of Iraq. That was the law. That was what I was tasked with doing, and the Clinton administration was not permitting the task to be accomplished.

By holding them to account, if that suddenly made me popular with the right, then so be it. It's

not something that I sought; it wasn't the purpose of what I was doing. But when the complexity of my stance became inconvenient to the right, when they found out it wasn't just about taking down the Clinton administration, but rather criticizing an American political position that put unilateral policy objectives and regime change higher up in the chain of priorities than disarmament, suddenly it wasn't convenient anymore to be saying, "Hey, we like this guy."

One cannot be held accountable for the words and actions of those who seek to selectively embrace what you say.

MT: When Bush talks about World War III, how likely is the scenario that an attack by us would escalate into that?

Ritter: I don't know about likely, but what I say is that I can sit here and spin scenarios that have it going in that direction. And these aren't fantastic scenarios.

MT: Would that be having Russia or China coming in?

Ritter: No, no, no. It would be something more like the destabilization of Pakistan to the point where a nuclear device gets in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists who are aligned with al-Qaeda and there's some sort of nuclear activity on the soil of the United States of America. That's more what I'm looking at. I don't think the Russians or the Chinese would become involved. They don't need to. All they have to do is sit back and wait and pick up the pieces — because it is the end of the United States as a global superpower. That's one thing I try to tell everybody. The danger of going after Iran is that it is just not worth it. What we can lose is everything, and what we gain is nothing. So why do it?

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