

**PRESS RELEASE**

Cheney Will Push Israeli Strikes Against Iran

May 6, 2007, (EIRNS)—Vice President Dick Cheney departs on Tuesday, May 8, on a six-day tour of four key Middle Eastern nations, and senior intelligence sources in the United States and the region believe that the top item on the Veep's agenda will be a military confrontation with Iran. According to one leading Arab analyst, due to intensive opposition within the United States military, diplomatic, and intelligence communities, Cheney will press for an Israeli attack on Iran, ostensibly over Iran's refusal to shut down its nuclear enrichment program. Once such an Israeli strike is launched, Cheney and his backers reason, Congressional and public opposition to a showdown with Tehran will evaporate, and the United States will step in to back Israel.

Other sources who share this evaluation have pointed to a number of recent developments, highlighting the preparations for a war against Iran. The Bush Administration has provided Israel with smart bombs and with the latest generation Patriot anti-missile batteries in recent months. Furthermore, in an interview with the German magazine Focus on April 28, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was quoted warning that Israel had the capacity to launch 1,000 cruise missile strikes against Iranian targets over a ten-day period.

Last month, former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu traveled to Washington, where he conferred privately with Vice President Cheney, and then addressed the annual Washington, D.C., convention of AIPAC. In his speech to the Israeli lobby group, Netanyahu equated Iran with Nazi Germany in 1938, and vowed that Israel would strike Iran before the Islamic Republic obtained the capability to build a nuclear weapon. In the wake of the Winograd Commission interim report, strongly criticizing the Olmert government's handling of the Summer 2006 Lebanon war, Netanyahu has launched a drive to unseat Olmert through a vote of no confidence in the Knesset, and return to power. So far, according to Washington and Israeli sources, Netanyahu is at least five Knesset votes short of the required 61 needed to replace Olmert. Polls in Israel show that, were there to be early elections, a Netanyahu-led rightwing coalition would win.

Cheney's six-day trip will take him to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Egypt. All four countries are leading Sunni allies of the United States, who have been under pressure from Cheney and National Security Council Middle East director Elliot Abrams, to ally with Israel in a politico- military coalition against Iran, since Cheney's Nov. 2006 visit to Riyadh.