

# COMMENTARY

## An accident waiting to happen

By Linda S. Heard

Online Journal Contributing Writer

Feb 22, 2007, 00:48

Some years ago, I was lucky enough to buy my dream car. It was a low white sports model with pop-up headlights. Within 10 minutes of my gleefully driving it out of the dealer's showroom, I found myself wedged in traffic with a four-wheel-drive slowly backing into me.

The driver was seated high up. He couldn't see me and was oblivious to my frantic use of the horn. You can guess the rest. Whenever I think of Iran I'm reminded of that trauma and my inability to prevent it.

Think about it! As the world goes about its business as usual, the US could well be on the brink of attacking Iran's nuclear facilities using nuclear-tipped bunker busters.

Evidence there is such a plan on the table is coming thick and fast but there is nothing we can do about it. Just as I did on that fateful day my new car was mangled, we can only shout to the wind and await the fireworks.

One of the most disturbing things is the way the new US Defense Secretary Bob Gates keeps insisting his country has absolutely no plans to attack Iran.

Dan Plesch, one of Britain's leading commentators on defense and security doesn't believe him. "American military operations for a major conventional war with Iran could be implemented any day," says Plesch.

"They extend far beyond targeting suspect WMD facilities and will enable President Bush to destroy Iran's military, political and economic infrastructure overnight using conventional weapons."

Professor of International Law Francis A. Boyle doesn't believe him. He wants George W. Bush and US Vice President Dick Cheney impeached before they can start a wider war in the Middle East.

"I believe that they [the neoconservatives] would like the opportunity to break the taboo of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and indicate to the world -- we here in the United States are fully prepared to use nuclear weapons and we just used them against Iran," he recently said on Talk Nation Radio.

Former UN weapons inspector, turned peace activist, Scott Ritter isn't swallowing Gates' assurances either. Here's what he said on the subject during a recent lecture: "Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to war with Iran. It's going to happen. There's nothing we can do to stop it."

The UN can't do anything because George Bush knows there is no way such a drastic course will get past Russia and China.

Some Democratic members of Congress are trying to do something. Speaker Nancy Pelosi and others want to force Bush to get the permission of lawmakers before he embarks on further preemptive wars. But in the absence of a backbone, Congress, with its slavish adherence to anything in the perceived interests of Israel, is unlikely to put up a fight.

Still struggling to find a way out of the Iraq fiasco, the US president knows he's virtually on his own with this one. His lame duck buddy, Tony Blair, is in no position to link arms this time around, while Russia's Vladimir Putin isn't pulling any punches when it comes to America's aggression and its ambitions to dominate the planet.

So he would have to be stark staring mad to bomb Iran against such opposition and in light of the political, humanitarian and economic mayhem that such an attack would trigger. Wouldn't he?

In truth, there could be method in his madness. Various papers penned by his neocon friends before he took office ("Clean Break" and the Project for the New American Century's "Rebuilding America's Defenses") make clear the Bush administration's end goal, which is control of this region and its resources to stem the rise of competitors.

There were basically two obstacles to that goal: Iraq and Iran. Iraq has been dealt with and now there is only one. Bush has vowed that he will not leave office with the prospect of Iran achieving a nuclear arsenal any time soon.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has repeatedly called Iran an existential threat to Israel and promised to thwart Iranian nuclear ambitions. The Iranians say they have no intention of dismantling their enrichment program. So in this case, something has to give.

But if attacking Iran is indeed his intention, how will Bush go about selling the idea to a skeptical public?

The answer is he can't. This obstacle leaves him with two options.

The first option would be to give Israel the green light to start bombing under the pretext Iran represents a danger to its very existence. As a close ally, the US would thus be obliged to join the fray.

The second option would involve the US launching what is known as a "false flag" operation, whereby it might bomb one of its own ships or planes and accuse the Iranians of striking first. There are precedents for this.

For more on False Flag operations, you can Google "Operation Northwoods," "The Gulf of Tonkin," the "USS Liberty" or "The Lavon Affair."

Also pertinent is the leaked White House memo that records a pre-Iraq war discussion between Bush and Tony Blair on ways to goad Saddam into making the first move.

One idea involved sending a US military jet painted with United Nations colors over Iraq in the hope the Iraqis would be stupid enough to shoot it down.

Interestingly, former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, once a fervent advocate of full spectrum US domination, recently warned a Senate committee that the Bush administration might resort to such tactics. A false flag operation would allow the US to play victim and frame any attack on Iran in a defensive light. Just as it did before going into Iraq, the White House is demonizing the Iranian leadership.

It is making accusations that Iran is supplying Iraqi insurgents and death squads with sophisticated weapons and aiding the Taleban in Afghanistan. Dubious intelligence reports are being produced concerning Iran's nuclear status. It's happening again. Or is it?

On the surface it looks like it. Bush has appointed an admiral to run the show. US aircraft carriers, strike forces and submarines are congregating in the region and the US asked permission from Turkey to launch an attack on Iran from its Incirlik Air Base, according to the UAE daily Al-Bayan. Turkey is said to have refused.

There is another possibility, although to my mind not a probability. This could all be a giant bluff on the part of the US in the hopes Iran will look at the devastation wrought on Iraq and roll over. At this stage there is no way of knowing.

My beautiful sports car was eventually repaired and looked as good as new but if the neocon war wagon is allowed to trundle over this region, it and the world will be scarred forever.

*Linda S. Heard is a British specialist writer on Middle East affairs. She welcomes feedback and can be contacted by email at [heardonthegrapevines@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:heardonthegrapevines@yahoo.co.uk).*

Copyright © 1998-2007 Online Journal  
[Email Online Journal Editor](#)