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# A New Tactical Twist in the Coming War on Iran

Chris Floyd | 18.08.2007 12:28 | [Anti-militarism](#) | [Other Press](#) | [Terror War](#) | [World](#)

In addition to advancing the demonization required for the larger strategy of violent regime change in Iran, it also aids what is now emerging as an important tactical move: a smaller-scale strike "at suspected training camps in Iraq run by the Quds force, a special unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps," McClatchy reports. This is what Cheney is now calling for, putting red, bloody meat on the bones of Bush's vaguely menacing statements.

The initial, small-scale raid would then itself become a justification for further action against Iran: "Did you see that bombing in the Green Zone yesterday? Of course it was the Iranians! It was obviously a revenge attack for the Quds raid. Now we have to retaliate for the tragic loss of our personnel in this cowardly terrorist action." And so on and so on, ratcheting up the level of military response – and public support – with each new iteration of the cycle.

Thus a small-scale raid would actually be a masterstroke in the Administration's psy-ops scheme to build support for a larger action to destroy the Iranian regime.

An American strike on Iran is coming closer. It probably won't take place in the next few weeks, because Bush is on vacation and will not want to be disturbed. And it probably won't take the form that many have expected (including this writer). But Bush himself has raised the ante in recent days, warning of vague punishments for alleged Iranian misdeeds – and unleashing an outright lie that Iran has openly "proclaimed its desire for nuclear weapons," when of course the very opposite is true. And now McClatchy Newspapers brings fresh confirmation that the decider behind the Decider – Dick Cheney – is calling for airstrikes against Iran. Indeed, it seems Cheney has already chosen the *casus belli* for such an attack – a provocation that we will doubtless see occurring any day now.

For some time, it has been thought – with good reason – that the coming Bush-Cheney attack on Iran would be aimed at the country's rudimentary nuclear power facilities. And it's true the old "mushroom cloud in American cities" ploy continues to be the Administration's best propaganda gambit in demonizing Iran and instilling fear of this demon in the public, as Bush demonstrated with his Goebbelsian lie this week. But even a ruthless, authoritarian "Unitary Executive" regime faces some political restraints on its brutal ambitions, as we noted here yesterday. It cannot act on its most radical plans until the PR ground has been properly prepared. (Even a supreme despot like Hitler was forced by public opposition to cancel his "Action T4" program of murdering the "inferior stock" of mentally and physically disabled people in Germany.) And the fact remains that it would be difficult to move even the docile American public to any great support for a sudden, massive assault on Iran's nuclear sites, when even the White House has to admit that Iran does not have nuclear weapons yet.

Recall that in the mendacious warmongering for the Iraq invasion, Bush and Cheney repeatedly insisted that Saddam Hussein did possess a vast arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, as Cheney himself declared outright on national television just before the attack: "We believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." [Which would have been quite a feat in itself, seeing as how Saddam never had any nuclear weapons to "reconstitute."] To sell the war to the American people, they had to sell the idea of Iraq actually possessing WMD. They have not been able to do that with Iran.

At least not yet. But Bush's lie about Iran's "open desire" for nuclear weapons is probably the beginning of a broader push to establish a fantasy scenario of a nuclear-armed Iran. If he is allowed to get away with an utterly false and easily disproven assertion about Tehran's open desire to build a bomb – and he has gotten away with it, completely, as Arthur Sibling notes – then what's to stop him from moving on to the next level, and declaring that Iran now possesses nuclear weapons? The Administration could simply assert that its secret intelligence sources have confirmed the existence of an Iranian nuke, despite the insistence of the International Atomic Energy Agency that it is not so.

There is ample precedent for this – in the very interview with Cheney cited above. Speaking to the ever-obliging Tim Russert in March 2003, Cheney flatly rejected the IAEA's declaration that Iraq did not have a nuclear weapons program at the time of the invasion. Here's the exchange:

Russert: And even though the International Atomic Energy Agency said he does not have a nuclear program, we disagree?

Cheney: I disagree, yes. And you'll find the CIA, for example, and other key parts of our intelligence community disagree. [CF: Those "key parts" included the "Office of Special Plans" set up by Cheney to cherry-pick intelligence data and stovepipe the admitted lies of Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress straight into the White House.]... And we believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons. I think Mr. ElBaradei frankly is wrong. And I think if you look at the track record of the International Atomic Energy Agency and this kind of issue, especially where Iraq's concerned, they have consistently underestimated or missed what it was Saddam Hussein was doing. I don't have any reason to believe they're any more valid this time than they've been in the past.

The Bush Regime already has a long track record of attacking and undermining the IAEA, and any other international body that hampers its agenda. There is absolutely nothing to prevent Cheney sidling up to his pal Timmy once again and declaring that "we disagree" with the IAEA's position on Iran's nuclear program: "they've got a bomb, we know it, and we will not wait on events when the American people are in danger."

So in the long run, for the kind of "regime change" operation that the Bush Administration and its bloodthirsty sycophant on the Right (and in the Center) have in mind, the nuclear fantasy is still the trump card. But as we know, the Bushists have opened a second propaganda front: the repeated, unproven charges that the Iranian government is directly involved in supplying deadly weapons and training fighters to kill Americans in Iraq. The New York Times' Michael Gordon – like Russert, one of the most reliable conduits of Bush Regime spin in the "respectable" corporate media – was hammering away at this theme again just a few days ago, stressing the Pentagon spin that the more sophisticated bombs shredding Americans in Iraq could only have come from Iran – when factories to produce such weapons have been found in Iraq, where native insurgents were making them, as Atrios pointed out – while further noting that the same Bushists who once claimed that Iraqis were capable of making the most advanced weapons on earth now say the grubby Arabs are too primitive to put together a roadside bomb without help from the wily Persians.

The latest Gordon servicing of his Pentagon spinners is one more fusillade in the Bushists' relentless drang nach Osten. In addition to advancing the demonization required for the larger strategy of violent regime change in Iran, it also aids what is now emerging as an important tactical move: a smaller-scale strike "at suspected training camps in Iraq run by the Quds force, a special unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps," McClatchy reports. This is what Cheney is now calling for, putting red, bloody meat on the bones of Bush's vaguely menacing statements. From McClatchy:

"President Bush charged Thursday that Iran continues to arm and train insurgents who are killing U.S. soldiers in Iraq, and he threatened action if that continues. At a news conference Thursday, Bush said Iran had been warned of unspecified consequences if it continued its alleged support for anti-American forces in Iraq. U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker had conveyed the warning in meetings with his Iranian counterpart in Baghdad, the president said. Bush wasn't specific, and a State Department official refused to elaborate on the warning.

"Behind the scenes, however, the president's top aides have been engaged in an intensive internal debate over how to respond to Iran's support for Shiite Muslim groups in Iraq and its nuclear program. Vice President Dick Cheney several weeks ago proposed launching airstrikes at suspected training camps in Iraq run by the Quds force, a special unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, according to two U.S. officials who are involved in Iran policy."

And as we noted above, Cheney is already drawing up plausible scenarios to "justify" this act of aggression:

"Cheney, who's long been skeptical of diplomacy with Iran, argued for military action if hard new evidence emerges of Iran's complicity in supporting anti-American forces in Iraq; for example, catching a truckload of fighters or weapons crossing into Iraq from Iran, one official said."

I think we can expect to see the "capture" of a truckload of people identified as fighters, carrying weapons – perhaps some of those 190,000 weapons conveniently misplaced by the Pentagon in Iraq –coming over from Iran very soon. (Can you say "Gleiwitz radio station"?) Or some similar incident to "confirm" direct Quds involvement in killing American soldiers.

A smaller-scale "punitive" raid on Quds bases in Iran would almost certainly be acceptable to the American public. After all, the United States has launched such raids repeatedly over the years, all over the world, under Democrats and Republicans, with widespread public support. From Reagan's bold strike on Moamar Gadafy's two-year-old daughter to Bill Clinton's brave destruction of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan (not to mention his continual bombardment of Iraq throughout his term) to Bush's noble bombing of refugees in Somalia this year, the American people have always stood ready to applaud (or ignore) quick punches at countries with which they are not at war. (We're leaving out here the larger-scale "incursions" and "pre-dawn vertical insertions" like Panama, Somalia (in the "Black Hawk Down" days), Grenada, Haiti, etc. – all of which were pretty acceptable too, come to think of it. As was the aggression in Iraq, of course, in its early days.)

Naturally, such a strike would provoke a reaction from Iran – or rather, it would allow the Administration to frame any untoward incident or attack on American positions anywhere in the world as a "reaction from Iran." (It's not likely that the indeed wily Persians would launch some crude, obvious counterstroke to such a raid, thus falling into the Administration's trap.) The initial, small-scale raid would then itself become a justification for further action against Iran: "Did you see that bombing in the Green

Zone yesterday? Of course it was the Iranians! It was obviously a revenge attack for the Quds raid. Now we have to retaliate for the tragic loss of our personnel in this cowardly terrorist action." And so on and so on, ratcheting up the level of military response – and public support – with each new iteration of the cycle.

Thus a small-scale raid would actually be a masterstroke in the Administration's psy-ops scheme to build support for a larger action to destroy the Iranian regime. The McClatchy story, like the recent FISA fiasco, is another reminder that the Bush Administration has not lost its ability to advance its agenda and steer the country into more and more sinister actions, even in the face of poor poll ratings and innumerable scandals. As long as they control the levers of power, without any genuine institutional opposition, they will continue to manipulate events to their liking, relying on their tried-and-tested fearmongering techniques (with the mighty assistance of the corporate media) to drag the American people along with them – either as open supporters or as dazed and confused bystanders, vaguely dissatisfied but unwilling to rise up and cast down the criminals and their accomplices.

**Chris Floyd**

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