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JEROME CORSI



WORLDNETDAILY EXCLUSIVE COMMENTARY

War with Iran is imminent

Posted: January 8, 2007

1:00 a.m. Eastern

In addition to moving additional [military](#) forces into the region, President Bush is putting into place a new political and military command team, all in preparation for an expanded war in the Middle East.

We have already noted that the USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) aircraft carrier battle group is heading to the Persian Gulf to join the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) aircraft carrier battle group currently on station there.

Additionally, the USS Boxer (LHD 4) amphibious assault ship, the flagship of the Boxer Expeditionary Strike Group, is on station in the Persian Gulf. On January 4, 2007, the USS Bataan (LHD 5), the command ship of the Bataan Expeditionary Strike Group, departed from Norfolk, Va., headed for forward deployment. Typically, we would expect the USS Bataan to replace the USS Boxer in normal rotation. Even if that is the destination of the USS Bataan, we would have two amphibious strike forces in the Gulf as the rotation is completed.

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Should Christians be armed?



Along with each carrier attack group comes a fleet of 12 ships, including two guided missile-cruisers, generally Ticonderoga-class, two guided missile destroyers, generally Arleigh Burke-class, and an attack submarine that is usually Los Angeles-class.

[U.S. Admiral William J. Fallon, head of U.S. Pacific Command is taking](#)

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over as the top commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, [following the retirement of Gen. John Abizaid](#). The transition of command from the Army to the Navy should be noted, especially with this much naval power concentrating in the Gulf. We should also note that Admiral Fallon has command experience in the 1991 Gulf War, where he commanded the Carrier Air Wing Eight on the USS Theodore Roosevelt during Operation Desert Storm. In 1995, he was the Commander of the U.S. Sixth Fleet battle force supporting NATO's Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia. [He is considered one of the Navy's top commanders in combined forces operations and an expert in amphibious landings.](#)

Quietly, the [Bush administration](#) is changing the entire command structure in the Middle East. [The U.S. top commander in Iraq, Gen. George Casey is being replaced by Gen. David Petraeus](#). During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Gen. Petraeus commanded the famed 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), leading the "Screaming Eagles" in combat. Following that, he commanded the [Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq](#), assuming responsibility for training [Iraqi forces](#). Petraeus is on record supporting a five-brigade expansion of U.S. forces in Iraq, in direct contrast to Gen. Casey, who expressed skepticism that [increasing U.S. troop levels in Iraq would help stabilize the country](#). The political deck shuffling also reflects a Bush administration decision to expand the war in the Middle East.

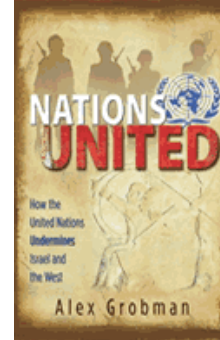
Immediately following the Republican Party electoral defeat in Nov. 2006, Bush announced that Robert Gates would be nominated to replace Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense. In 1987, Gates withdrew his nomination to become Director of the CIA because of a controversy that had developed concerning his role in the Iran-Contra affair.

Credentials in the Iran-Contra affair seem right now to be a plus in the White House. John Negroponte is being moved from Director of National Intelligence to being the top deputy at the State Department to Condoleezza Rice. During Iran-Contra, Negroponte was U.S. [ambassador](#) to Honduras, [where he encouraged the expansion of U.S. military and intelligence presence in Central America](#). Replacing Negroponte as Director of National Intelligence is Admiral Mike McConnell, who served as the intelligence officer of the Joint Chiefs during Operation Desert Storm.

Maybe the best way to understand the Iraq Study Group (ISG) is that it was only Round One, George H. W. Bush's attempt to get his old team together to convince his son to abandon Iraq. The ISG included both James Baker III, Reagan's chief of staff who advised that Iran-Contra could well be illegal and might lead to impeachment, as well as Edwin Meese, who as Reagan's attorney general lead what amounted to a whitewash internal investigation of Iran-Contra. Baker typically represents the Council on Foreign Relations line on the Middle East – protect the oil, use military sparingly, and abandon Israel to Arab oil interests whenever possible. With this approach having been rejected by George W. Bush, the next alternative, Round Two, was for George H. W. Bush to bring in key hawks from the Iran-Contra days, to implement his son's expansion of the war.

Much of the plan for an Iraq surge in force seems to originate from Frederick Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute, [whose report, "A Plan for Success in Iraq," has been joined by retired Gen. Jack Keane](#). Kagan is a military historian who has taught at West Point. Gen. Keane was a career Army paratrooper (featured in Tom Clancy's book, "Airborne"), who rose to being [vice chief of staff of the Army](#).

Notably, one AEI expert on Iran who is not being consulted by the Bush administration is Michael Ledeen, whose Iran-Contra credentials are also quite strong. Ledeen has continuously argued that we could produce peaceful change in Iran, if only the Bush administration would define regime-change as our policy in Iran and the State Department would release the millions Congress has allocated to support non-governmental



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organizations around the world who would work toward the regime-change objective.

If President Bush were truly to follow Ronald Reagan's example with the ex-Soviet Union, he would support Michael Ledeen's objectives, while stepping up military pressure in the region. I continue to press for implementing Michael Ledeen's strategy of creating Ukraine-like peaceful change from within Iran, although truthfully I fear the window for that happening may have passed.

President Bush may feel he has no alternative but to push military options in the Middle East. Following the Iraq Study Group's advice and staging a military withdrawal from Iraq could well support a Democratic effort in Congress to investigate the Iraq War as a prelude to impeachment. We should also note that Harriet Miers has resigned as White House counsel, setting the stage for Bush to bring in a lawyer with heavy duty Washington credentials in fending off hostile investigations.

Also somewhat cornered right now is Ehud Olmert, Israel's prime minister. Olmert, like Bush, is experiencing a level of low public opinion that typically precedes removal from office. Olmert has consistently lost public favor by following the White House "roadmap to peace," which has involved an old James Baker plan calling for Israel to cede territory to the Palestinians in exchange for peace. Condi Rice, a James Baker protégé, has gotten nowhere following this plan for two years, only to see Hamas control the Palestinian Authority and launch rockets back on Israel from the newly-returned Gaza Strip. Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a strong opponent of the Ahmadinejad regime in Iran, and the Likud Party would welcome a vote of no-confidence in the Knesset and a call for new elections.

Ahmadinejad himself is the third leader in this drama who may well be on a short leash. Having just lost a round of local elections throughout Iran, Ahmadinejad finds himself facing once again student protests in the street. Ahmadinejad has pursued nuclear weapons and funding terrorist groups including Hezbollah and now also Hamas, rather than keeping his campaign promise to return oil wealth to the people of Iran. The Iranian parliament has moved up the date for the presidential election by one year. Now, with Supreme Leader Khamanei dying of cancer, there may soon be a fight in the Assembly of Experts to see if former president Rafsanjani can wrest control away from Ahmadinejad and his spiritual leader Ayatollah Hasbah-Yazdi, a chief adherent of the belief that the Twelfth Imam, the Mahdi, will soon come out of the well from centuries-long occlusion to lead Shi'ite Islam in worldwide triumph.

The one wild card that would change the equation would be an aggressive move by Iran. Should Iran launch a cruise missile at a U.S. Navy ship in the Gulf, we will have war right now. Should an Iranian missile sink a U.S. carrier, the U.S. population would experience another 9/11 moment. At that point, a massive U.S.-led military strike on Iran would become inevitable. Would President Bush provoke Iran to make just such a move? A pre-emptive strike on Iran would never be approved by a Democratic Congress, but U.S. massive retaliation for a serious act of war by Iran would be a totally different matter.

Truthfully, we are already at war with Iran. My concern stems from the realization that the internal politics in Iran may be such that Ahmadinejad cannot allow a massive U.S. military build-up in the region without making some kind of a response. With Iraq's borders as open as is our southern border with Mexico, Iran has now sent into Iraq a sufficient number of terrorists and arms to create a real civil war. Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi militia, which featured so prominent in the Shi'ite rejoicing that reduced Saddam's hanging to a partisan event, is an Iran-funded creation. Ahmadinejad cannot afford to see a strengthened U.S. military destroy Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army.

If a broader war breaks out in Iraq, Olmert will certainly face pressure to

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send the Israel military into the Gaza after Hamas and into Lebanon after Hezbollah. If that happens, it will only be a matter of time before Israel and the U.S. have no choice but to invade Syria. The Iraq war could quickly spin into a regional war, with Israel waiting on the sidelines ready to launch an air and missile strike on Iran that could include tactical nuclear weapons.

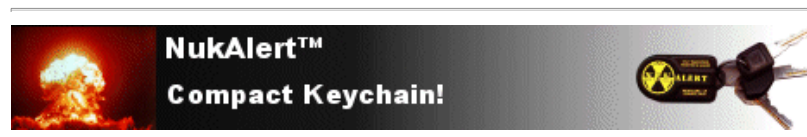
With Russia ready to deliver the \$1 billion TOR M-1 surface-to-air missile defense system to Iran, military leaders are unwilling to wait too long to attack Iran. Now that Russia and China have invited Iran to join their Shanghai Cooperation Pact, will Russia and China sit by idly should the U.S. look like we are winning a wider regional war in the Middle East? If we get more deeply involved in Iraq, China may have their moment to go after Taiwan once and for all. A broader regional war could easily lead into a third world war, much as World Wars I and II began.


Odds are that we will not enter 2008 with all three of these leaders – Bush, Olmert, and Ahmadinejad – as heads of state. If President Bush does go the military route in the Middle East, he will bet his presidency on that decision.

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Jerome R. Corsi received a Ph.D. from Harvard University in political science in 1972 and has written many books and articles, including co-authoring with John O'Neill the No. 1 New York Times best-seller, "Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out Against John Kerry." Corsi's most recent book was authored with Michael Evans: "Showdown with Nuclear Iran." He co-authored "Rebuilding America" with Ohio gubernatorial candidate Ken Blackwell. Dr. Corsi's other recent books include "Black Gold Stranglehold: The Myth of Scarcity and the Politics of Oil," which he co-authored with WND columnist Craig R. Smith, and "Atomic Iran."



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