

# September Surprise

## Get ready for it...

by Justin Raimondo

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**W**hile **the rest** of the pundits opine about the meaning and implications of Sarah Palin's ascension from small town mayor to prospective vice president – and whether or not her daughter's private life is fair game for any media outlet other than the *National Enquirer* – those of us whose job it is to stand watch on the ramparts and report the real news are wondering when – not if – the War Party will pull a rabbit out of the proverbial hat. For **months**, I've been **warning** in this space that an American attack on Iran is imminent, and now I see that the Dutch have reason to agree with my assessment. Their intelligence service reportedly has pulled out of a covert operation inside Iran on the grounds that a U.S. strike is right around the corner – in "**a matter of weeks**," according to *De Telegraaf*, a Dutch newspaper.

As the story goes, the Dutch had infiltrated the purported Iranian weapons project and were firmly ensconced when they got word that the Americans are about to launch a missile attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. They wisely decided to close down the operation and pull out.

Remember, the Israelis have been **threatening** to strike on their own for **months**: what's changed is that now, apparently, the U.S. has caved in to what is a blatant case of blackmail and has agreed to do the job for them.

We haven't heard much about Iran lately, at least compared to the scare headlines of a few months ago, when rumors of war were swirling fast and furious. The Russian "threat" seems to have **replaced** the Iranian "threat" as the War Party's bogeyman of choice. What we didn't know, however, is that the two focal points are intimately related.

According to **this report** by veteran *Washington Times* correspondent **Arnaud de Borchgrave**, the close cooperation of the Israelis with the Georgian military in the run-up to President Saakashvili's blitz of South Ossetia was predicated on a Georgian promise to let the Israelis use Georgia's airfields to mount a strike against Iran.

The main problem for Tel Aviv, in making its threats against Iran at all credible, has been the distance to be covered by Israeli fighter jets, which would have a hard time reaching and returning from their targets without refueling. With access to the airfields of "the Israel of the Caucasus," as de Borchgrave – citing Saakashvili – puts it, the likelihood of an Israeli attack entered the world of real possibilities. De Borchgrave avers:

*"In a secret agreement between Israel and Georgia, two military airfields in southern Georgia had been earmarked for the use of Israeli fighter-bombers in the event of pre-emptive attacks against Iranian nuclear installations. This would sharply reduce the distance Israeli fighter-bombers would have to fly to hit targets in Iran. And to reach Georgian airstrips, the Israeli air force would fly over Turkey.*

*"The attack ordered by Saakashvili against South Ossetia the night of Aug. 7 provided the Russians the pretext for Moscow to order Special Forces to raid these Israeli facilities where some Israeli drones were reported captured."*

Reports of anywhere from 100 to 1,000 Israeli "advisers" in Georgia do not bode well for the situation on the ground. With the Israelis already installed in that country, the logistics of carrying out such a sneak attack are greatly simplified. Israeli pilots would only have to fly over Azerbaijan, and they'd be in Iranian airspace – and within striking distance of Tehran.

Faced with this fait accompli – if the Dutch are to be believed – the Americans seem to have capitulated. In which case, we don't have much time. Although de Borchgrave writes "whether the IAF can still count on those air bases to launch bombing missions against Iran's nuke facilities is now in doubt," I don't see why the defeat of the Georgians in Saakashvili's war on the Ossetians has to mean the plan to strike Iran via Georgia has been canceled. Indeed, reading de Borchgrave's riveting account of the extent of the Tel Aviv-Tbilisi collaboration, one finds additional reasons for all concerned to go ahead with it:

*"Saakashvili was convinced that by sending 2,000 of his soldiers to serve in Iraq (who were immediately flown home by the United States when Russia launched a massive counterattack into Georgia), he would be rewarded for his loyalty. He could not believe President Bush, a personal friend, would leave him in the lurch. Georgia, as Saakashvili saw his country's role, was the 'Israel of the Caucasus.'"*

Saakashvili, a vain and reckless man, now has even more reason to go behind Uncle Sam's back and give the Israelis a clear shot at Tehran. With this sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of the Americans, the rationale for a more limited, shot-across-the-bow strike by the U.S. becomes all too clear.

After all, if the Israelis attacked, the entire Muslim world would unite behind the Iranians. If, on the other hand, the U.S. did Israel's dirty work, with Tel Aviv lurking in the background, it would conceivably be far less provocative, and might even generate sub rosa support among the Sunni rulers of America's Arab allies. It's going to happen anyway, goes the rationale, and so we might as well do it the right way, rather than leave it to the Israelis, who have threatened – via "independent" commentators like Israeli historian and super hawk Benny Morris – to use nuclear weapons on Iran's population centers.

In terms of American domestic politics, the road to war with Tehran was paved long ago: both major parties and their presidential candidates have given the War Party a green light to strike Tehran, McCain explicitly and Obama tacitly, albeit no less firmly.

The stage is set, rehearsals are over, and the actors know their lines: as the curtain goes up on the first act of "World War III," take a deep breath and pray to the gods that this deadly drama is aborted.

~ Justin Raimondo

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