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Who's Planning Our Next War?

By [Patrick J. Buchanan](#)

Of the [Axis-of-Evil](#) nations named in his [State of the Union in 2002](#), President Bush has often said, "The United States will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."

He failed with [North Korea](#). Will he accept failure in Iran, though there is no hard evidence Iran has an active nuclear weapons program?

William Kristol of *The Weekly Standard* said [Sunday](#) a U.S. attack on Iran after the election is more likely should Barack Obama win. Presumably, Bush would trust John McCain to keep Iran nuclear free.

Yet, to start a third war in the Middle East against a nation three times as large as Iraq, and leave it to a new president to fight, would be a daylight hijacking of the [congressional war power](#) and a criminally irresponsible act. For Congress alone has the power to authorize war.

Yet Israel is even today pushing Bush into a pre-emptive war with a naked threat to attack Iran itself should Bush refuse the cup.

In April, Israel held a five-day civil defense drill. In June, Israel sent 100 F-15s and F-16s, with refueling tankers and helicopters to pick up downed pilots, toward Greece in a simulated attack, a dress rehearsal for war. The planes flew 1,400 kilometers, the distance to Iran's uranium enrichment facility at Natanz.

Ehud Olmert came home from a June meeting with Bush to [tell Israelis](#):

"We reached agreement on the need to take care of the Iranian threat. ... I left with a lot less question marks regarding the means, the timetable restrictions and American resoluteness. ...

"George Bush understands the severity of the Iranian threat and the need to vanquish it, and intends to act on the matter before the end of his term. ... The Iranian problem requires urgent attention, and I see no reason to delay this just because there will be a new president in the White House seven and a half months from now."

If Bush is discussing war on Iran with Ehud Olmert, why is he not discussing it with Congress or the nation?

On June 6, Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz threatened, ["If Iran continues its nuclear weapons program,](#)

[we will attack it.](#)" The price of oil shot up 9 percent.

Is Israel bluffing—or planning to attack Iran if America balks?

Previous air strikes on the PLO command in Tunis, on the Osirak reactor in Iraq and on the presumed nuclear reactor site in Syria last September give Israel a high degree of credibility.

Still, attacking Iran would be no piece of cake.

Israel lacks the stealth and cruise-missile capacity to degrade Iran's air defenses systematically and no longer has the element of surprise. Israeli planes and pilots would likely be lost.

Israel also lacks the ability to stay over the target or conduct follow-up strikes. The U.S. Air Force bombed Iraq for five weeks with hundreds of daily runs in 1991 before Gen. Schwarzkopf moved.

Moreover, if Iran has achieved the capacity to enrich uranium, she has surely moved centrifuges to parts of the country that Israel cannot reach—and can probably replicate anything lost.

Israel would also have to over-fly Turkey, or Syria and U.S.-occupied Iraq, or Saudi Arabia to reach Natanz. Turks, Syrians and Saudis would deny Israel permission and might resist. For the U.S. military to let Israel over-fly Iraq would make us an accomplice. How would that sit with the Europeans who are supporting our sanctions on Iran and want the nuclear issue settled diplomatically?

And who can predict with certitude how Iran would respond?

Would Iran attack Israel with rockets, inviting retaliation with Jericho and cruise missiles from Israeli submarines? Would she close the Gulf with suicide-boat attacks on tankers and U.S. warships?

With oil at \$135 a barrel, Israeli air strikes on Iran would seem to ensure a 2,000-point drop in the Dow and a world recession.

What would Hamas, Hezbollah and Syria do? All three are now in indirect negotiations with Israel. U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq could be made by Iran to pay a high price in blood that could force the United States to initiate its own air war in retaliation, and to finish a war Israel had begun. But a U.S. war on Iran is not a decision Bush can outsource to Ehud Olmert.

Tuesday, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Adm. Michael Mullins left for Israel. CBS News cited U.S. officials as conceding the trip comes ["just as the Israelis are mounting a full court press to get the Bush administration to strike Iran's nuclear complex."](#)

Vice President Cheney is said to favor U.S. strikes. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Mullins are said to be opposed.

Moving through Congress, powered by the Israeli lobby, is [House Resolution 362](#), which demands that President Bush impose a U.S. blockade of Iran, an act of war.

Is it not time the American people were consulted on the next war that is being planned for us?

[Patrick J. Buchanan needs no introduction to VDARE.COM readers; his book *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, can be ordered from Amazon.com. His latest book is *Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World*, reviewed here by Paul Craig Roberts.](#)

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