

Iran Contras

A number of extremely reliable Arab and American intelligence sources have reported that the Bush Administration already has “boots on the ground” inside Iran, running a multi-front “Contra”-style destabilization. These operations, which are still on a relatively small scale, involve ethnic and tribal paramilitary forces, conducting ambushes, assassinations, and “blind terrorist” bombings—with the active involvement of American, British, Pakistani, and Israeli “advisors,” the sources report.

While some European governments are naively taking this “Contra” program as a de facto assurance that the Bush Administration has postponed any “big” air war campaign against Iran until after the November elections in the United States, such assurances are not all that solid, particularly as long as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld are still in office, and are steering U.S. national security policy.

For now, there are three confirmed “Contra” fronts being conducted (see the map): Attacks from the Kurdish region of northern Iraq into Iran, using Kurdish assets with an Israeli involvement; attacks from the Baluchistan region on the Pakistani border, with Pakistani military assistance; and Mujahideen e-Khalq (MEK) operations, also staged from border areas of Iraq, where the MEK have large camps.

Two recent incidents underscore the operational nature of this. In March, attacks launched from Baluchistan killed an estimated 22 local government officials; and an April Kurdish ambush killed five Iranian soldiers.

Source indicates that the Israeli “role,” beyond training and logistical assistance in Kurdish commando operations into Iran, involves planned heavy attacks on Hezbollah



positions inside southern Lebanon, coincident with a full-scale U.S. air campaign against Iran. This is to preempt asymmetric warfare retaliation by Iran against U.S. and Israeli assets. Arab sources say that Israel has a Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld green light to deal with Syria if it gets into the act by defending Hezbollah positions inside southern Lebanon. Furthermore, Arab sources have pointed to a recent naval basing agreement between the United States and Turkey, granting the U.S. Navy access to three Turkish ports—two on the Aegean Sea and one in the Mediterranean. The latter could be important if the United States became directly involved in strikes on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon, backing up Israeli ground and air assaults.

Above all else, this “Contra III” operation, now in its early phases, is a revival of the thoroughly discredited 1996 “Clean Break” scheme of Richard Perle, David

there is a larger, political dimension which must be grasped. The Kurdish question is an integral part of the ongoing Iraqi political crisis.

A Deeper Dimension

Iraqi Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki is now called upon to strike a deal with the Sunni and Kurdish factions in Parliament, to form a government. The Sunnis are demanding that the Constitution be revised, and that all commitments to federalism be struck out. The Kurds, on the other hand, are committed to federalism, as a stepping-stone to independence.

The problem is yet more complex: The Kurds are demand-

ing that the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, be recognized as the capital of their autonomous region, which most Kurds refer to as “Kurdistan,” the proto-independent state. This is being challenged by Turkmen, as well as Shi’ite and Sunni Arabs. As reported by the *Washington Post* on April 25, (Arab) Shi’ite militiamen, both from the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades, have been flowing into the city. Moqtadar al-Sadr’s representative in Kirkuk was quoted saying that 7,000 to 10,000 Shi’ites were prepared to fight with his forces, if need be. In response, the Kurdish Peshmerga militia has reinforced its troops in the city and in nearby Tuz. This is a recipe for civil war in the North.

In this context, the U.S. neo-cons’ playing the PKK card

Wurmser, and Douglas Feith, to fundamentally alter power arrangements in Southwest Asia, through “regime changes” in key Arab states, Palestine, and Iran.

U.S. sources added a fourth “Contra” front to the “regime change” campaign inside Iran. During Azerbaijani President Heidar Aliyev’s meetings with President Bush and Vice President Cheney the week of May 1, he came under tremendous pressure to assist in the activation of Azeri minority destabilizations inside the northwestern region of Iran, bordering on Azerbaijan. One senior U.S. intelligence source warned that, if Aliyev allows himself to be drawn into the Bush Administration schemes, a more likely consequence will be his own overthrow, given his shrinking popularity and his country’s longstanding cooperation with Tehran (the two nations’ Presidents met recently and signed various military agreements). Dick Cheney, before becoming Vice President, was a trustee of the U.S.-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce, along with Richard Perle, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Sources have also reported on a flood of opium and heroin streaming into Iran from Afghanistan, as another feature of the U.S.-led “regime change” operation. During the 1980s, the United States used narco-terrorists as a key source of funding and logistics for both the Nicaraguan Contras and the Afghan Mujahideen.

Both American and Arab sources also warned that these on-the-ground provocations against the Tehran regime are likely to backfire, driving the Cheney-Rumsfeld bloc within the Bush Administration to quickly revive their air war schemes to attack Iran’s nuclear program sites. One experienced U.S. military source warned that such low-intensity operations are soon likely to result in the capture or killing of an American “advisor,” and that this will have serious diplomatic repercussions for a Bush Administration that is already widely discredited in the eyes of governments around the world.—*Jeffrey Steinberg*

(with Israeli help), is playing with dynamite. If the PKK terrorist activities spark moves toward an independent Kurdistan, as noted earlier, then Iran and Turkey will be forced to deploy all capabilities available to protect their countries from secessionist tendencies. In the decades-long war between the PKK and Turkey, 30,000 people died. Turkey is willing today to deploy whatever is needed, to prevent a repetition of that disaster. If they have almost 300,000 troops on the scene, they are not joking.

The entire region is about to blow. Unless the pyromaniacs who started the fire—Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, and Bush—are removed from office, the danger of the region’s descent into Hell is great.

Book Review

The Philippines’ Fight For Nuclear Energy

by Mike Billington

Trailblazing: The Quest for Energy Self-Reliance

by Geronimo Z. Velasco

Manila: Anvil Publishing, 2006

209 pages, paperback, 350 pesos

Twenty years ago, the Philippines received the final approval from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to turn on the fully completed nuclear power plant in Bataan, which was to provide 16% of the energy needed in the island of Luzon, including the capital, Manila. This was to be the first commercial nuclear power plant in all of Southeast Asia, representing the scientific and industrial coming of age of the Philippines, and by implication its Southeast Asian partners, in the post-colonial era.

The plant was never opened. The father of that nuclear facility, Geronimo “Ronnie” Velasco, has finally, after these 20 long years, written a memoir of his work as Minister of Energy, and CEO of the Philippines National Oil Company (PNOC) between 1972 and February 1986, when then President Ferdinand Marcos was deposed in a military coup supported and directed from Washington, under the cover of a “people’s power” movement. Eliminated along with Marcos and Velasco were the nuclear power plant, the government control of the oil and energy utilities, and the 11 major industrial projects that were to be fueled by these national energy programs. The hysteria induced in the population at that time against the Marcos regime was to no small extent the result of an international campaign by synarchist banking circles in the West, now known as the neo-conservatives, against nuclear power, aimed at undermining the energy independence of sovereign nations.

Velasco’s book, and private discussions with this author, demonstrate a clear understanding of the evil character of that attack on the Philippines by the Anglo-American financial and oil interests, even if he is not always clear on the reason for that subversion. The fact that it took 20 years to write this book reflects the fact that only now is there an audience for