

War on Iran Will Trigger 'Hundred Years' Conflict

by Michele Steinberg

On Aug. 3, after being informed of Secretary Robert Gates' visit to Kuwait, and the news reports of a U.S. plan for withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, Lyndon LaRouche concurred that any mass U.S. exit from Iraq would best be carried out through Kuwait, but warned in the strongest possible terms, that Cheney's plan for an August war with Iran *is still not off the table*.

Welcoming the discussion of the withdrawal plans, LaRouche noted that the United States has the ability to secure the withdrawal through the air-cover capabilities now in the region, and strongly endorsed the idea of a U.S. announcement of formal plans to withdraw all American forces—even if the time frame is 18-24 months.

"Everyone in the region would breathe a sigh of relief at such an announcement," LaRouche said. "Nobody will want to see the conflict start up again, and I think that there is a good chance that such an announcement would see a cessation of the shooting to a large extent. Once the shooting stops, it will be very difficult to get it started again."

But, the reality remains, warned LaRouche, that the Cheney factor is still a threat. The Vice President is pushing an attack on Iran, and the greatest concern is a "Gulf of Tonkin II" incident, particularly during the month of August, giving Cheney the pretext for the attack.

What is the Gulf of Tonkin scenario? In August 1964, the United States claimed that two American warships had been attacked by the North Vietnamese in the Gulf of Tonkin, provoking the U.S. Congress to pass the Southeast Asia Resolution (a.k.a. the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution), granting President Lyndon Johnson the authority to provide military assistance to any country in the region, threatened by communism. The Gulf of Tonkin attack never happened, but the war went on for ten more years.

Cheney Tries To Buy a Sunni Bloc

The urgency of LaRouche's warning about a "Gulf of Tonkin II" can only be understood by looking backwards, to Vice President Dick Cheney's Nov. 25, 2006 visit to Saudi Arabia, arranged by former Ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin-Sultan.

On Nov. 27, 2006, *EIR* released to policy-makers around the world, a memorandum entitled "Behind the Cheney Trip to Riyadh," as part of LaRouche's drive to stop Cheney's Iran war plan. That memorandum, published in the Dec. 8, 2006 issue of *EIR*, stated:

"A well-placed and highly reliable source has provided the following account of Vice President Dick Cheney's Nov. 25, 2006 visit to Saudi Arabia. The report coincides with other evidence of a scheme to induce the United States to self-destruct. While the source may have missed some elements of the picture emerging from the Cheney visit, the essential details appear to be accurate. As will be clear when you read below, all sane forces inside the United States and elsewhere must react to these latest Cheney actions in the most effective preemptive fashion.

"The source reported:

"1. The essential message delivered to Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah by Vice President Cheney was that there is no basis for dialogue with Iran. The U.S. position in the region has been weakened, and therefore a new security architecture must be established, particularly in the Persian Gulf, to contain and counter Iran's growing influence. Already, NATO has been in dialogue with Qatar and Kuwait, in pursuit of upgraded cooperation. Cheney proposed to establish a new regional balance of power, through a Sunni Arab alliance with Israel, to confront the Iranian threat. Cheney argued that to negotiate with Iran at this time would be tantamount to surrender. A new military organization will be built, involving the Gulf Coop-

eration Council (GCC) states, Egypt and Jordan. NATO and the United States will be closely involved, and Israel will be a *de facto* participant. These moves led by Cheney obviously aim to preempt adoption by the Bush Administration of any recommendations from the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group, to initiate diplomatic talks with Iran.”

Only with this memorandum in mind, is it possible to understand last week’s frantic series of meetings by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates, especially the July 31 meeting at Sharm El-Sheikh, where Rice and Gates met with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). Ostensibly about Israeli-Palestinian peace, Palestinian President Abu Mazen was not even there—instead, he was in Moscow meeting with President Vladimir Putin. The Russian President made clear that he will also be meeting with Hamas.

The real purpose of the Sharm El-Sheikh meeting was to try to cement Cheney’s “Sunni bloc,” with Rice offering a huge payoff to the Arab leaders: a \$20 billion sale of high-technology weapons to Saudi Arabia and the other countries of the GCC, and the assurance that Israel will let it go through. The substance was *exactly* what *EIR* described in the November 2006 memorandum—an Arab military alliance, with Israel as the implicit silent partner—against Iran.

But, all is not going well. Intelligence sources have told *EIR* that the real size of the package is \$80 billion, and the systems are offensive in nature. And, despite the fact that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert publicly supports the arms deal, the plan has run into a buzzsaw of opposition in the Congress—not only from the Israeli Lobby, which has opposed previous Saudi weapons deals, but from mainstream Democrats like Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.). Rangel raised the issue of Saudi Arabia’s lack of cooperation with the United States in fighting al-Qaeda terrorism, and the many unanswered questions surrounding the BAE Systems “Al-Yamahah” deal, now under intense Justice Department scrutiny, due to charges of bribery of former Saudi ambassador and Cheney partner-in-crime, Prince Bandar.

And, the opposition among the uniformed U.S. military command against this war has never been greater. One high-level intelligence source explained: The worst—and most probable—outcome of this Sunni bloc against Iran would be a “Hundred Years’ War” of Sunni-Shi’a conflict. And, military strikes against Iran would not succeed in overthrowing the regime, but would likely keep them in power for at least the next full generation.

The ‘Cheney Plan’ for Iran

The “Cheney Plan” for war on Iran is nothing more than the utopian madness laid out by Norman Podhoretz, the “paterfamilias,” since the 1970s, of the Leo Strauss-trained neo-conservatives, and the father-in-law of Elliott Abrams, the current National Security chief for the Middle East. Abrams is

Cheney’s chief agent for eliminating a Palestinian state, and was the architect of the plan to arm Fatah’s Mohammed Dahlan faction to assassinate leading Hamas elected officials. It was the “Abrams Plan” that led to the civil war in Gaza, and the breakup of the Palestinian National Unity Government.

As to Iran, Podhoretz described his plan of attack in the June 2007 issue of *Commentary* magazine, where he wrote, “In short, the plain and brutal truth is that if Iran is to be prevented from developing a nuclear arsenal, there is no alternative to the actual use of military force—any more than there was an alternative to force, if Hitler was to be stopped in 1938.

“Since a ground invasion of Iran must be ruled out for many different reasons, the job would have to be done . . . by a campaign of air strikes. . . . And because such a campaign is beyond the capabilities of Israel, and the will, let alone the courage, of any of our other allies, it could be carried out only by the United States.” Podhoretz dismisses all warnings against the war with a quote from the increasingly irrelevant Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) that, “The only thing worse than bombing Iran is allowing Iran to get the bomb.” It is as crazy as Ahmed Chalabi’s “cakewalk” to victory in Iraq.

The End of the Cheney/Bandar Game

After the July 31 Sharm El-Sheikh meeting, Rice and Gates went their separate ways, and Gates’ track was far more important. He made a brief visit to Kuwait on Aug. 1, to review plans for a U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq. Kuwaiti officials, according to MSNBC news reports, said they could handle the withdrawal of all 160,000 American troops in a matter of months; although an unnamed American general said that withdrawal plans have already been developed, that would require as much as two years to remove all the American combat forces, and the 1 million tons of military equipment in the country.

Intelligence sources told *EIR* that Gates found a worsening situation in Iraq, with mounting evidence of a Saudi role in funding the insurgency that is killing U.S. troops. Gates’ observations of this Saudi role came only days after Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. envoy to the UN, blew the lid off the Saudi terrorism scandal in an interview on CNN on July 29. Khalilzad told CNN that he was indeed referring to Saudi Arabia in his July 20 *New York Times* article, when he wrote that some friends of the United States in the region were “pursuing destabilizing policies” in Iraq. “There is no question that Saudi Arabia and a number of other countries are not doing all they can to help us in Iraq,” said Khalilzad.

There is no doubt that the Cheney-Bandar dirty deal is coming unglued under pressure of these revelations of Saudi terrorist ties, and the criminal investigation into Bandar’s corrupt dealings with BAE.

But the pathetic spectacle of Rice in Saudi Arabia, peddling Cheney’s arms deal, shows that the danger remains, and the “Sunni alliance” is still being pursued.