

Cheney Escalates Lunatic War Drive Against Iran

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Lyndon LaRouche minced no words in discussions with colleagues on Nov. 22, accusing Vice President Dick Cheney and the “Israeli Mafia” of being behind the latest destabilization of Lebanon—the assassination on Nov. 21 of Industry Minister Pierre Gemayel. LaRouche cited other Israeli provocations since the Lebanon War of July 2006, including a string of confrontations with French peacekeepers, and threats to attack German ships in the Mediterranean that are part of the Lebanon peacekeeping effort, as “state-of-mind” evidence of the war intent.

Things have become so tense between the French and Israeli governments over the Lebanon crisis, that French soldiers serving in the Lebanese peacekeeping mission are now authorized to shoot at Israeli Air Force jet fighters overflying Lebanon, after a failed Paris meeting in mid-November between French and Israeli military officials.

LaRouche warned that the climate is being set for an Israeli military raid on Iran’s purported nuclear weapons sites, which would lead to a mobilization of support for a larger attack on Iran, involving the United States and other nations—with the quiet but enthusiastic backing of many frightened Sunni Arab regimes, which are being stampeded by the Cheneyacs in Washington into this suicidal stance.

LaRouche characterized the Gemayel assassination as a signal of Israeli plans to launch a military strike against Iran in the near future—at the urging of Cheney and his own masters within the Anglo-American “war party.”

Evidence of these Cheney-encouraged Israeli attack plans have been visible in recent weeks, including in President Bush’s widely reported comments to French President Jacques Chirac that, “I do not discount the possibility that Israel will attack Iran, and if it does this—I will understand

it.” Those comments were reported in the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz* on Nov. 22. And President Bush has reportedly repeated the point recently in several other venues.

A Nov. 22 editorial in *Ha’aretz* signed by Gideon Samet further warned of just such an Israeli sneak attack on Iran: “Close your eyes and think about the possibility that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, together with the chief of staff, the minister for strategic threats, and his other advisers, will wrack his brain and decide to act against the Iranian nuclear threat—and imagine what this means for you. This is the man,” he warned, “who is responsible for managing a failed war against a guerrilla army in Lebanon. Does this make you feel calm?” Samet referenced the Seymour Hersh article, published in the Nov. 20 *New Yorker* magazine, which warned that Cheney is still intent on a military attack on Iran, and that U.S. and Israeli special forces commandos are already operating on the ground inside the country, planting site markers for future bombings, and organizing sabotage operations by Kurds, Baluchis, and Azeris.

Netanyahu Rants

On Nov. 24, speaking in Jerusalem at a conference of the Orthodox Union, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a close Cheney ally, openly called for Israeli action against Iran in the most rabid of terms. Describing Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as representing a greater danger for the Jewish people than did Adolf Hitler, because of Iran’s alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons, Netanyahu declared, “The future of the Jewish state is as in danger as it has ever been in the last half-century.” Making a not-so-veiled reference to Israel’s own extensive, undeclared nuclear weapons program, Netanyahu said, “We must use the powers that



USAF/Airman 1st Class Barry Loo

Lyndon LaRouche has warned that Dick Cheney (sporting a jacket of the military he never served in) and his masters in the Anglo-American war party are planning a U.S. or Israeli nuclear strike against Iran.

we've amassed to make the Jews no longer defenseless and able to shape their destiny and protect their future. This is the most important thing that we can do today. Everything else is secondary." Several weeks earlier, in a speech in Los Angeles, Netanyahu was even more blunt: "It's 1938, and Iran is Germany. And Iran is racing to arm itself with atomic bombs."

LaRouche concluded his warning of an imminent Cheney-encouraged Israeli attack on Iran with a caution against what he called "kinematic thinking." Do not look for narrow cause and effect, LaRouche warned. There has been a long-term master plan to blow up the entire extended Southwest Asia and Persian Gulf region, to bring about an end to the post-1648 Westphalian era of the nation-state system, and in particular, to destroy the United States. This, he concluded, is what is driving Cheney and company to now seek to play the Israeli "breakaway ally" game to detonate that long-standing plan.

Such a U.S.-backed Israeli strike against Iran, though militarily inconsequential—unless Israel were to use nuclear weapons—would trigger a wave of global asymmetric warfare, the kind of permanent "clash of civilizations" that Britain's Arab Bureau operative Dr. Bernard Lewis has been promoting for decades. Lewis, like long-time British agent-of-influence Dr. Henry Kissinger, has been a top advisor to Vice President Cheney, frequently leading informal seminars at the Vice President's residence at the Naval Observatory in Washington.

Kissinger Speaks—and Cheney Acts

Kissinger himself weighed in for an Israeli strike against Iran in a ponderous op-ed piece, published in the Nov. 24 *Washington Post*, and several European newspapers. While ostensibly promoting diplomatic dialogue among the United States, Europe, the Sunni Arab states, and Tehran, Kissinger pointedly wrote: "The nuclear negotiations with Iran are moving toward an inconclusive outcome. The Six [the UN Security Council's permanent five plus Germany—ed.] eventually will have to choose either effective sanctions or the consequences of an Iranian military nuclear capability and the world of proliferation that implies. Military action by the United States is extremely improbable in the final two years of a Presidency facing a hostile Congress—though it may be taken more seriously in Tehran. Tehran surely cannot ignore the possibility of a unilateral Israeli strike if all negotiation options close."

Later in the same op-ed, Kissinger also promoted the idea, already being peddled by neo-conservatives in the Vice President's office and at the American Enterprise Institute, of an American-European-Sunni Arab alliance with Israel *against Iran*—what Kissinger euphemistically called a "policy of equilibrium" between Iran and the Sunni regimes.

The same time that Kissinger's rant appeared in the *Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* published a Nov. 24 wildly provocative lead front-page story, titled "Religious Divide: To Contain Iran, U.S. Seeks Help From Arab Allies." Mischaracterizing the flurry of U.S. diplomacy as "a bid to stabilize the region and build a coalition to contain Iran's Shi'ite regime," author Jay Solomon accurately catalogued a full-court press by top Bush Administration officials, to align Sunni Arab regimes against Tehran, in what amounts to a bizarre war alliance of Washington, Tel Aviv, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. Solomon did quote Middle East scholar Vali Nasr of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, warning against such a campaign: "The whole rhetoric of containing Iran could spark competing extremism," he warned. "Washington doesn't want to be seen as actively encouraging this."

Or do they? The fact that Vice President Cheney, the leading war-hawk in the Bush Administration, kicked off the Sunni Arab dialogues, with a Nov. 24 trip to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, underscores that some in the Bush Administration are in no way backing off from plans for hard military confrontation before leaving office—perhaps, even before the 110th Congress is sworn in at the beginning of January 2007.

Joshua Muravchik, an AEI resident scholar and leading neo-con propagandist, put it bluntly in an article published in the November/December 2006 issue of *Foreign Policy*. "Make no mistake," he wrote, "President Bush will need to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities before leaving office. It is all but inconceivable that Iran will accept any peaceful inducements to abandon its drive for the bomb. Its rulers are religious ideological fanatics who will not trade what they believe is

their birthright to great power status for a mess of pottage. Even if things in Iraq get better, a nuclear-armed Iran will negate any progress there.”

Muravchik warned, “The global thunder against Bush when he pulls the trigger will be deafening, and it will have many echoes at home. . . . We need to pave the way intellectually now and be prepared to defend the action when it comes. . . . The defense should be global in scope. There is a crying need in today’s ideological wars for something akin to the Congress for Cultural Freedom of the Cold War, a global circle of intellectuals and public figures who share a devotion to democracy. The leaders of this movement might include Tony Blair, Vaclav Havel, and Anwar Ibrahim.”

Other War Councils

In addition to Cheney’s meetings with King Abdullah and other top Saudi officials, President Bush is also scheduled to be in Amman, Jordan at the end of November, to meet with King Abdallah II and with Iraq’s Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi’ite who has fallen out of favor with Washington, amidst talk of a U.S. “Sunni turn,” which has also been dubbed “re-Baathification.”

Both Tom Hayden and Paul William Roberts wrote on Nov. 24 that secret talks have already taken place between leading Iraqi Sunni insurgents and Bush Administration officials in Amman. One meeting, according to Jordan’s Prince Hassan, included former Iraqi Vice President and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, who is being looked to as a key interlocutor between Washington and leading Sunni insurgents. Prince Hassan told journalist Roberts that Secretary of State Condi Rice has “made a personal appeal to the Gulf Cooperation Council last month to act as intermediaries between the U.S. and the armed Sunni resistance, not including Iraq’s Al Qaeda leaders.”

A further indication of this policy turn was also cited in the *Wall Street Journal*: On Nov. 30, Rice will hold meetings with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, and the member states of the GCC, the six Persian Gulf Sunni oil sheikhdoms. According to the *Journal*, “They are expected to discuss how to deter Iran from meddling in the politics of neighbor countries and from developing a nuclear arsenal. . . . The visits come amid U.S. efforts to build a Sunni-based regional alliance. U.S. naval fleets have engaged in training exercises with several Persian Gulf countries. Last month, the U.S. conducted war games with Bahrain, Qatar, the U.A.E. and about two dozen other countries about 20 miles outside of Iran’s territorial waters. The exercises were part of the Bush Administration’s Proliferation Security Initiative, which seeks to stanch weapons trafficking.”

New Stovepipes for Old

Much hoopla has been made of the pending release of the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Commission, a Congressionally sponsored and White House-endorsed Iraq

Study Group (ISG). But there are growing signs that the Cheney gang inside the Bush Administration has already moved preemptively to undercut the impact of the effort, by launching an in-house Iraq policy review, to be completed simultaneous to the Baker-Hamilton effort. The primary input of the Baker-Hamilton group has been long anticipated: Start direct talks, with no preconditions, with Tehran and Damascus. But a Nov. 23 *Newsday* story by Washington bureau chief Tim Phelps warned that, “Internal strife within the Baker Commission, outright opposition from President George W. Bush and Tuesday’s assassination of a cabinet member in Lebanon are complicating the prospect of U.S. overtures to Syria and Iran over Iraq, informed sources say. A source who spoke recently to a leader of the Iraq Study Group said he complained bitterly about internal dissension and partisanship among members of the supposedly bipartisan group, and was worried about reaching consensus on the key issues.”

Further threatening the efforts of the ISG is a revival of the pre-Iraq war “stovepipe” of dubious intelligence directly to the Vice President’s office from the Pentagon, bypassing the CIA and other major intelligence community components. The existence of this stovepipe was featured in the latest Seymour Hersh *New Yorker* piece, “Iran: The Next Act,” but earlier reports that the chief Iraq pre-war intelligence spinmeister, Abraham Shulsky, of the Office of Special Plans, had been reassigned to work on “the Iran problem” at the Pentagon’s Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy, had already raised eyebrows.

Hersh revealed that a new, highly classified CIA study, based on U.S. technical intelligence efforts, raised serious doubts that Iran was conducting an ambitious secret nuclear weapons program. But that CIA assessment has been challenged by “intelligence from Israeli spies operating inside Iran,” who “claimed that Iran has developed and tested a trigger device for a nuclear bomb.” According to Hersh, the details of the Israeli spies’ findings have been withheld from the CIA, but the “raw” intelligence has been passed from the Pentagon to Cheney’s staff, and is being used as powerful ammunition in the faction fight inside the Bush White House.

The stakes in this fight are enormous. An Israeli or American bombing attack against Iran would unleash chaos on a regional or global scale; and a new oil price shock, an almost certain consequence of a hard confrontation with Iran, would blow out the global financial system, adding to the chaos.

Which brings us back full circle to Lyndon LaRouche’s warning that the events now unraveling in Southwest Asia are not the result of tragic reactions and counter-reactions. They are the playing out of a master-plan for global disaster, that would destroy the United States, en route to plunging the planet into a New Dark Age. This is why LaRouche insists that the path to peace in the war-torn Middle East begins with the impeachment of Dick Cheney and George Bush.