

'We've Got To Bring the Hammer Down on Iran'

Retired Army general Vallely is currently the head of the Military Committee of Frank Gaffney's Center for Security Policy and a member of the Iran Policy Committee, a gaggle of neo-conservatives formed to promote war and rebellion in Iran. He was interviewed by telephone on Aug. 15 by Bill Jones. In an earlier conversa-



tion, Vallely had told Jones that he knew that Osama bin Laden was in Iran, and that Ken Timmerman (author of *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran*), had learned from Iranian dissidents in Europe that Iran already had nuclear weapons. "All roads lead to Tehran," Vallely said.

EIR: I wanted to ask you a few more questions on this whole Iran scenario. You indicated that, if push came to shove, and some military action were to be taken, you would recommend a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz?

Vallely: Yes, the Strait of Hormuz is the chokepoint for going in and out of Iran by sea—oil, imports, whatever, has to go through there. And it would be the most feasible option, if we went that route. It would be that, because then you can basically allow all ships to go in and out except Iranian ships. That would provoke—obviously some kind of a reaction. And the other down side is, of course, whether the Iranian people who would like to see the mullahs go, would put then any kind of a *force majeure* [extraordinary circumstance] there that would be supportive of that, and not create a lot of negatives. But someone has got to deal with this Iranian issue. Because they're absolutely convinced that they can do anything they want to, including the continued support of terrorism, and nobody's going to do anything about it.

We know the Europeans won't do anything about it. Like I told a couple of groups, I think we're probably going to find for the third time in the last hundred years that we're going to have to bail the French out again, because they don't get it. Britain now gets it. When I was up on the Lebanese border in March of this year, it was apparent, the sightings of Iranians in uniform with the Hezbollah, on patrol. And of course they

control and feed the Hezbollah as the grown child of Iran, that it has been.

EIR: And what period of time was this? Before or after the withdrawal of the Syrians?

Vallely: Well, of course when I was there a lot of these things were occurring at that time, including the problems they were having in Beirut. But certainly we know that the only border in the world that is controlled by a terrorist organization is the Lebanese-Israeli border. That's completely controlled by Hezbollah. They've been able to very successfully infiltrate all of the towns and villages in southern Lebanon; they do it by buying the people off, of course. They give them food. They give them money. And of course all that money comes from Iran. Hezbollah is the most potent force in that area, as far as Lebanon is concerned. And I get a lot of intelligence out of Beirut through a couple of Lebanese sources.

So here you've got the situation now with the disengagement from Gaza going on, and we know, we're going to see it anyhow, that's going to become a very large terrorist camp. Hamas is going to control it, not the Palestinian Authority. Hamas is directly supported by Hezbollah. So you have this nexus of terror, that is connected and fueled by Iran and their surrogate, Syria. So what do you do? Nobody can figure where the hell the Administration is going on any of this.

EIR: Maybe they haven't figured it out either?

Vallely: They can't seem to figure any strategy out. I had dinner last night with the Speaker of the House—Denny Hastert was out here last night, and Congressman Dennis Rehberg (R.-Mont.)—we had a fundraiser for him. So I had dinner with eight congressmen, and these were all conservative Republicans, and nobody can figure out where in the hell this Administration is going strategically. There's no Iranian policy, there's no Greater Middle East Policy that's articulated. It's the same rhetoric. So that I'm finding more and more conservative Republicans are trying to figure out, is Bush acting more like his father every day, or what's going on? So it's a real dilemma. I just sense a lot of frustration.

EIR: Unless they do something that they're not telling anybody yet?

Vallely: Well, that's what everybody keeps saying, but there's never any action. I mean, you know, Powell went in to Damascus and laid down things, but there's never any follow-up, never any action taken. And certainly it appears that Condoleezza Rice has hit a wall like Colin Powell did. There's no strong diplomatic effort that we have. Condoleezza Rice goes up and meets with Abbas over there, who's certainly not in any control; Hamas is controlling, not the Palestinian Authority. And she comes out of there again, and then we send conflicting signals to Israel, continually. And Israel is not in good shape over there, politically, as you know, because of the disengagement.

“Just think of what one nuclear, small 20-kiloton weapon would do in Manhattan. . . . We’re thinking the naval [blockade] will really push them to do something stupid. And we hope they do. And then bring the hammer down on them. We know they’re going to use them against us. There’s nothing wrong with pre-emption.”

But I do know the Israelis have completed the targetting, for the targets in Iran. And they’re prepared to do something. Now, whether they will or not is another question. They know they’re the primary target of Iran. And you can see this whole disengagement thing, if it starts going south, and Gaza becomes the terrorist territory, with direct port entry, and entry from the Philadelphia line, the sector between Egypt and Gaza. Now you have clear paths coming in from the sea and from Egypt, and Hamas and Hezbollah, and Iran, of course, will take full advantage of that. You know if we had some clear, strong diplomatic efforts—I see *nothing* coming out of the State Department. Do you? You’re there, but I can see they are doing nothing there that is either aggressive, or dealing with strength.

EIR: Well, I’m sure they’re very divided on this issue. I don’t know exactly what the internal debates are.

Vallely: Well that’s where good strong leadership comes in. Who’s the President and who’s not? If I’m the President, I can have these debates, that’s fine, but sometimes I’ve got to make decisions, and go forth. But I don’t see any decisions coming out. And the attack dogs are always out there on the Democratic side. But there are no attack dogs any more on the Republican side. They’ve sort of silenced DeLay for a while here. And you find no attack dogs in the Senate or Congress any more. So to me, I’m sitting out here in Montana, and I see a weak Congress, I see a weak State Department. I see the the CIA trying to get on track. We don’t even have any good agent intelligence coming out of the Middle East.

EIR: That’s been a problem for a long time now.

Vallely: You know, I’ve got better intelligence coming out of the Middle East. I’ve got a guy from the Department of Defense that is assigned to me now, an intelligence guy, to process all the information that I’m getting directly out of the Middle East, including the sighting of bin Laden back in November, last year.

EIR: Now tell me about the options with Iran. You say the Israelis have targetted sites in Iran. There is also talk that the U.S. has also done its own targetting as well.

Vallely: Yes, it has, it’s done 81 targets, it’s already been done.

EIR: OK. But tell me what do you do with it? Anything they have of importance is obviously buried very deeply. And even some of my Israeli contacts will tell me, “You can’t do like Osirak on the Iranian facilities, you won’t get to anything important.” The facilities are buried much too deep to do that.

Vallely: Well, that’s not true. Let’s say you do designated strikes against the hardened facilities they have—just the psychological impact of laying down some JDAMs [Joint Direct Attack Munition—free-fall bombs fitted with a guidance system and tail kit] on those sites. You can dig down five or six stories, but I can still close you up. I can block you off. I can get down two or three stories; there’s a lot of weapons systems that can close these sites down. You can go ten stories and I still can close you down. The hardened sites don’t worry me.

EIR: You’re saying you can close them down, and they can’t get out.

Vallely: Yeah, there’s lots of ways [laughs], you know with a bunker buster, which we’ve given to Israel; we’ve delivered those all. They got brand new F-16s that are fully loaded, that we gave them or sold to them.

The Iranians are very smart. And this is where it all started. It was when Carter was so weak, when Khomeini took over, took over our embassy, our weak response there. So, if you go back to the late ’70s, Iran has been the pivotal state, along with Saudi Arabia, in fronting a lot of this. And the Saudis will do nothing about the Wahabis, the preachers of hate. Kuwait’s made some moves in that area. They won’t allow this preaching anymore. They’ve made some progress.

The other thing we’re working on now is the nuclear deterrence strategy against radical Islam, much like we had in the Cold War, where we told the Russians, you know, you launch once, and ten of your cities are gone. OK. Somehow we’ve got to tell radical Islam, that any indication of *one* nuclear weapon coming into the United States, and Mecca and Medina become sand. There’ll never be another hajj. And they have to have one completed hajj over their lifetime [laughs]. Not that we would do it, but the fact is you have to put the fear of God in them. It’s the only thing they understand. Did you read Ken Timmerman’s new book?

EIR: I sure did. It’s all over the place. Everybody’s reading it.

Valley: Yeah, and Ken and I have been on together, and Ken has his information from different sources than I had. So the question is, what do responsible nations do? We *cannot* let radical Islam and the Iranians destabilize the Middle East and the world. We just can't do that. They can't continue to destabilize what's going on. So the question is, who has the balls enough to do anything? And there's diplomatic things you can do. Sanctions don't work in the Middle East. That's a farce! We put sanctions on Syria. Hell, they have cash, you can buy anything in the Middle East if you have cash. So sanctions don't mean anything.

EIR: It was also the stance of the Iran Policy Committee that you would try to encourage popular revolt within the country. And obviously there's a lot of discontent with the mullahs. But it seems to me you're dealing with the Shi'a here, you're dealing with a very sensitive type of nationalism which is going to be aroused by this. Even the people who are opposed to the mullahs give their full support to their right as a nation to develop the full nuclear cycle for their energy production.

Valley: Look, we know the North Koreans were involved with the Iranians. We knew A.Q. Khan in Pakistan was involved with them. We knew about the Libyans. It's all connected. You know, it's not so hard to figure out. It really isn't. And everybody wants to make this so complicated. You change the regime in Iran, you change the whole Middle East. All those other things will tend to fall apart very quickly if they don't have Iranian support. So the question is, how do you do it? You can't depend on the Europeans for anything. I don't even worry about the Europeans. I told the Israelis the same thing: "Don't worry about the damned Europeans. You do what you have to do."

Dore Gold¹ and I worked on a strategy called *Defensible Borders*, a paper which we put out. That's a good one to read, by the way. It shows how Israel has the right to defend its borders, like anybody else. But I think the downside is, and I think even Sharon knows deep in his mind, that if this thing goes south in Gaza, like we think it will, then they [Israel] will go for a complete occupation of the West Bank and Gaza until every terrorist organization is put out of business. That's the only solution there. And we'll have to see what happens. But I know the Israelis are prepared to take very decisive action militarily, if we see this rise in terrorism there. We have even reports of al-Qaeda being in Gaza now. A report came in, they have cells working in Gaza now with Hamas, as they have been given sanctuary in Iran.

1. President of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs; he was the 11th Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. He has written a book, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, in which he maintains that the ideology prompting Islamic terrorists is rooted deeply in Saudi Arabian history. He claims that Saudi Arabia has become one of the main areas of refuge for al-Qaeda, in addition to the Pakistani-Afghanistan border, and the Iraqi-Iranian border.

EIR: A pretty hairy situation, it seems.

Valley: Yeah, and at some point in time you've got to bring down the hammer. If not, we're going to be under this continued terrorism threat. Did you read my book *Endgame*?

EIR: I just paged quickly through it.

Valley: Well, read it again. Everything we said in there two years ago is coming true. It all comes back to Iran. And you're never going to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem until you solve the larger Middle East situation.

EIR: There has been some talk of using tactical nuclear weapons to get at some of these sites.

Valley: Yeah, that option's there.

EIR: Would that be effective in terms of closing them down? And secondly, would people accept—

Valley: The fact that you irradiate the area, so there's no access—it's the same thing with irradiating Mecca and Medina. But if they're threatening, which we know, to bring nuclear weapons into this country—we know that's their ultimate goal, simultaneous detonations in New York, Washington, and maybe Chicago or Los Angeles. Just think of what one nuclear, small 20-kiloton weapon would do in Manhattan.

EIR: But what do you think the reaction would be if we used any type of nuclear devices, without having been provoked by their doing something similar?

Valley: Well, that's why we're thinking the naval thing will really push them to do something stupid. And we hope they do. And then bring the hammer down on them. We know they're going to use them against us. There's nothing wrong with pre-emption.

EIR: But you're dealing with public opinion here. You know there's going to be an outcry over this.

Valley: That'll happen no matter what you do. So Bush has nothing to lose. Do what he needs to do. American wants leadership. You're always going to have the anti-whatever-whatever. The other key thing is, what I keep telling audiences, that you can't drag wars out. If you go to war, it's gotta be decisive, it's gotta have finality, and it's gotta be done as quickly as possible. If not, the piranha will eat you alive. And that's what happened in Vietnam. We didn't, in Korea, with finality. And so we still have troops there.

The only finality we've seen is with Japan. That was finality.

Patton said, "Don't let the Russians take Berlin." We let that happen, and look what we had: the Cold War, and what they did in the aftermath of World War II.

But we just don't seem to have men of wisdom and strategic vision anymore, that understand. It's like Bush. The biggest mistake that he made, and I said it, at the time I was briefed on the post-Saddam period: We ended up putting in

the Coalition Provisional Authority under Jerry Bremer, and that created the problems we have today. And I've had that validated many, many times and by many senior military commanders as well as the Iraqis. We basically ended up putting a State Department organization in charge of a war zone.

At any rate, now we're trying to recover, rather than putting in an interim government that we recommended they do, just like we did in Afghanistan. Bring the army back immediately. Get them on the payroll. Don't create these big bases and the Green Zone, and do all that stuff. I mean, you ought to see it over there in Iraq. It's like a big commissary, big PX's. You got to strike hard, fast, get it over with, bring the enemy to their knees as quickly as possible. You can't drag wars out. We're already beyond the time that we took out Hitler, which was three years and eight, nine months—we took out the Japanese *and* the Germans. We're now over that.

EIR: And we seem to be stuck there.

Vallely: We won't lay the hammer down on Syria. We know the Baathists. We know they're living up in the Aleppo area of Syria. We know the funding. We know the Damascus pipeline coming out of Russia, through Ukraine and Belarus into Damascus. So they're being fed weapons systems and things coming through that pipeline. And then you've got the pipeline from Iran, working into Lebanon and Syria. And all we hear is rhetoric.

Hey, listen, over a year and a half ago, I would have sent some strong signals into Syria. I'd have taken out ten of the offices in Damascus plus two of the training sites where we know they are, and at 2:00 o'clock in the morning, those things disappear. And at 6:00 o'clock in the morning we have plausible deniability [laughs].

EIR: Well, Bush does sometimes tend to follow in the footsteps of his father, although sometimes he might have indicated some sort of "gumption"?

Vallely: Yes, he has.

EIR: But what about Vice President Cheney?

Vallely: Yeah, where the hell is he at? He ought to be the attack dog. Keep him in the damned closet over there in the West Wing somewhere. I'd make Cheney the attack dog every day! [laughs] You, know, I can't figure it out. Bush has nothing to lose. Nothing to lose. And he won't do anything stupid. But you've got to be aggressive, and if you don't bring these few nations that are causing these problems, supporting terrorism, to task, it's going to just continue and continue and continue. And that's why the Iranians—they know in their own mind that they're not going to do anything. That's why they're being the way they are. They're not dumb.

EIR: The statements they were making yesterday were very tough.

Vallely: You see, you do what you have to do. You don't worry about world opinion, because they're on to the next story in another two weeks, no matter what you do. That's why I told the Israelis: "Do what you have to do to protect yourself. Quit listening to our State Department."

EIR: We'll see what happens now with the Iranian President coming to address the UN, if they allow him to come, that is.

Vallely: Oh, what a farce that is! Do you believe that? The enemy coming into our camp.