

Don't Give 'Hitler' Cheney a Green Light

There is only one question being asked by every diplomat in Washington, and in capitals throughout the world: Is Dick Cheney really going to order an attack on Iran? And when?

The international press shows a concerted propaganda drive in favor of an "inevitable" war. President Bush himself has raved about the danger of "World War III" if Iran doesn't give up its alleged nuclear weapons program. Neocon godfather Norman Podhoretz, now ensconced as a foreign policy advisor to Republican Presidential contender Rudy Giuliani, has been giving interviews, including one to the London *Daily Telegraph*, declaring that an air war could finish the job on Iran in "five minutes." Leaks are being put out to major journals such as Germany's *Der Spiegel*, on scenarios for an attack.

Sources in the U.S. intelligence community report that Cheney is indeed furiously pushing for war against Iran and Syria, and demands that there be *no negotiations* or dialogue with these nations. However, reported one retired Republican official, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and key military commanders are "pushing back" against the war drive.

It would seem that the word has even reached the U.S. Senate, which so ignominiously passed a resolution in support of the Administration's decision to declare Iran's Revolutionary Guard a "terrorist organization" a few weeks ago, that the danger of war is imminent.

In a private letter to President Bush, Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) on Oct. 17 urged him to pursue "direct, unconditional and comprehensive talks with the Government of Iran." The letter was obtained by *The Washington Note* and posted on its website Nov. 1.

Hagel warns in his letter that the Administration's diplomatic strategy is stalled, and "unless there is a strategic shift from the current situation, I believe we will find ourselves in a dangerous and increasingly isolated position in the coming months"—and he adds that he doesn't see how the actions now being taken will avert that.

Encouraging Bush to offer a completely different course for U.S.-Iran relations, of direct and unconditional talks, Hagel says: "An approach such as this would strengthen our ability across the board to deal with

Iran. . . . It could create a historic new dynamic in US-Iran relations, in part forcing the Iranians to react to the possibility of better relations with the West. We should be prepared that any dialogue process with Iran will take time, and we should continue all efforts, as you have, to engage Iran from a position of strength."

"We should not wait to consider the option of bilateral talks until all other diplomatic options are exhausted," Hagel warns the President. "At that point, it could well be too late."

Hagel's action was followed by those of leading Democrats: on Nov. 1, Presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama introduced a resolution saying Bush has no authority to launch war against Iran; on Nov. 2, Presidential contender Gov. Bill Richardson issued a statement entitled "Stop the Insanity, No War with Iran"; and on Nov. 2, 29 Senators, led by James Webb (D-Va.), and including Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton, sent a letter to President Bush warning against an attack on Iran. That letter read, in part:

"We wish to emphasize that no congressional authority exists for unilateral military action against Iran. This includes the Senate vote on September 26, 2007 on an amendment to the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. This amendment, expressing the sense of the Senate on Iran, and the recent designation of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, should in no way be interpreted as a predicate for the use of military force in Iran."

It should be clear, that no mere resolutions will stop Cheney from taking whatever actions he can get away with. The best means of stopping his war, is to begin impeachment proceedings against him, as Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) has scheduled to do on Nov. 6. Under those conditions, as the retired intelligence professionals from VIPS (Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity) said recently, military officers opposed to a new war would at least have the political leeway for delay.

Right now, patriots have little choice. We are dealing with a "Hitler" figure bent on war, and to be soft on removing Cheney is "giving Hitler a green light."