

Cheney orchestrated Israel's losing war

By [Michael Carmichael](#)

Global Research, August 14, 2006

14 August 2006

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Dick Cheney orchestrated Israel's losing war against Hizbullah by authorizing George Bush and Condoleezza Rice to encourage Ehud Olmert to launch the war against Lebanon as a prelude to America's forthcoming war against Iran.

Following briefings from top Israeli military officials, Cheney approved plans for an air war against Lebanon as a preliminary move to disarm Hizbullah in advance of America's broader military objective - to launch an air war against Iran. Had the US launched its war against Iran without Olmert's intervention in Lebanon, Hizbullah would have been free to attack Israel. Cheney's plan was designed to disarm Hizbullah, but it was based on what now appears to have been a false assumption - that Israel would win their war in Lebanon.

According to Seymour Hersh, Israel's tactical profile for disarming Hizbullah was modelled on US plans to disarm Iran. Following Cheney's guidance, the Pentagon mapped out a comprehensive campaign of air strikes against Iran's civilian infrastructure targeting airports, bridges, roads, power stations as well as military command and control centres and other key buildings identified as hostile territory. According to a former senior intelligence official who talked to Hersh, Israel's attack on Lebanon and Hizbullah is a "mirror image" of US plans for its imminent war with Iran.

Responding to the pressure of time, Cheney and his circle of advisors urged the Israelis to launch their war against Lebanon at the earliest date possible in order to allow the US war against Iran to launch during George Bush's presidency. Apparently, now that Israel has dealt its blow against Hizbullah, Bush and Cheney feel less constrained about ordering their war against Iran.

A former diplomat who talked to Hersh predicted that the Iran crisis "will really start at the end of August, when the Iranians will say no (sic)," to a UN deadline to halt their uranium enrichment project.

During the autumn campaign for midterm elections, it is becoming increasingly likely that Cheney will encourage Bush to order the launch of the Iran War - a ploy designed to rekindle support for their neoconservative strategy for world domination.

Following the defeat of Joe Lieberman in the Connecticut primary, the Republicans have seized on the war against terror as their most effective political message for attacking their Democratic Party rivals. Most Democrats now favour a smooth and certain withdrawal of US forces from Iraq rather than the open-ended policy favoured by the Bush-Cheney White House that would leave troops in the field indefinitely.

Even though the cessation of hostilities was scheduled to take place in the early hours of

this morning, both sides are prepared for the ceasefire to fail. But, the continuation of war between Israel and Lebanon will make no difference to Bush and Cheney's plans to attack Iran, a scheme that is driven by political factors rather than geostrategic calculations.

Michael Carmichael founded The Planetary Movement, a nonprofit public affairs organization based in the United Kingdom. He can be reached through his website: www.planetarymovement.org

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