

Memo To POTUS—Eyes Only: From The Department of Pre-War Planning And Threat Exaggeration

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Here are excerpts from a “secret document” whose authenticity cannot be authenticated, perhaps because I wrote it myself.

As you requested, here is the scenario for how we can launch a war on Iran while publicly denying we are doing so.

This is a digest of the multi-dimensional and multi-track strategy that is in place, and is being pursued simultaneously in a coordinated manner, by The Executive Branch, Defense Department, State Department, and all intelligence agencies. (And despite reports from our spy agencies that Iran is right to insist it is not making nuclear bombs. Why let a denial get in the way of useful paranoia?)

This high-level strategy involves three core missions:

1. Preparing the public

Thanks to our media friends and assets, we have been orchestrating a campaign that, at the same time, demonizes Iran’s leaders, while reinforcing our own posture as favoring defensive diplomacy, promoting global security and peace while refusing be led by aggressive Israeli demands. Our financial sanctions are being explained as a way to press Iran to limit its nuclear ambitions, and not bankrupt the regime.

Our media and public diplomacy campaign is working. The public can be conditioned into supporting us. The Pew Center has released a study showing, “The public (now) supports tough measures - including the possible use of military force - to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Nearly six-in-ten (58%) say it is more important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action. Just 30% say it is more important to avoid a military conflict with Iran, even if it means that country develops nuclear weapons. These opinions are little changed from October 2009.

There have been reports in recent weeks that Israel may soon attack Iran’s nuclear facilities. About half of Americans (51%) say the United States should remain neutral if Israel takes action to stop Iran’s nuclear program, but far more say the U.S. should support (39%) than oppose (5%) an Israeli attack.”

Israel is working with us in this effort, although. Like, in the laws governing the “SUPER PACS,” we can’t be seen to be “coordinating” with each other

The Israel Lobby has been pushing for a tougher stand against Syria and Iran, as are the NeoCon “intellectuals” and even, increasingly, “liberal” hawks who support humanitarian intervention.

The response to the crisis in Syria shows how easily a pro-intervention consensus can be achieved, as David Rieff points out:

“What is surprising, though, is that despite the disaster of Iraq, looming withdrawal in what will amount to defeat in Afghanistan, and, to put it charitably, the ambiguous result of the U.N.-sanctioned, NATO-led, and Qatari-financed intervention that brought down Muammar al-Qaddafi’s regime, is how nearly complete the consensus for strong action has been even among less hawkish liberals, whether what is done takes the form of the United States and its NATO allies arming the Free Syrian Army, opening so-called humanitarian corridors, or encouraging Turkey and a coalition of the willing within the Arab League to do so.”

Even critics of our policy—and of the media—are reporting about how supportive our media has become to our narrative and its aims. Glenn Greenwald wrote in Salon, “Many have compared the coordinated propaganda campaign now being disseminated about The Iranian Threat to that which preceded the Iraq War, but there is one notable difference. Whereas the American media in 2002 followed the lead of the U.S. government in beating the war drums against Saddam, they now seem even more eager for war against Iran than the U.S. government itself, which actually appears somewhat reluctant.”

Greenwald goes on to denounce network news stories, but the lack and background among viewers is unlikely to resonate with a public that is getting our message to the exclusion of others.

Example: He writes stridently about one ABC report, this way: “It’s a perfect museum exhibit for how empty-headed American media stars uncritically recite whatever they are told by government officials, exaggerate or fabricate bad acts by the designated Enemy du Jour while ignoring and suppressing the precipitating acts of America and its client states, and just generally do whatever they can to keep fear levels and war thirst as high as possible. This is nothing short of irresponsible propagandistic trash.”

Mr. President, these denunciations, happily, don’t work with a public that are kept in the dark. We are still being seen as responding to public demands for security rather than creating them the way President Bush did.

2. Preparing the Battlefield

Efforts are underway to prepare the military for a future campaign. The 5th Fleet, based in Bahrain, has already expanded its presence near the Straits of Hormuz. Troops are carrying our exercises on Islands off the coast of Yemen, near Iran. While the Iranians did capture one of our drones, our satellite surveillance is being strengthened.

The Administration’s commitment to covert operations under the supervision of Admiral William T. McRaven who successfully ran the mission to eliminate bin Laden is in charge with the full support al the covert services including pysops teams, and more than 66,000 men and women running these secretive operations.

We are getting more public support for these efforts that mimic Hollywood movies and video

games, even as critic Bill Van Auken explained recently,

“The Obama administration has relied ever more heavily on these elite military units, which have become what amounts to a secret army under the command of the US president and accountable to no one. JSOC, like the CIA, has been empowered to draw up kill lists of alleged terrorists and launch assassination missions. ...

The increasing reliance on such methods has been facilitated by the embrace of militarism and imperialism by a layer of the affluent upper-middle class that previously was identified with anti-war sentiments. Typical of this milieu is Newsweek editor Tina Brown, who penned a nauseating editorial recently praising Obama for being “the Caped Crusader when it comes to commanding America’s killing machine.” She described a recent exploit by American special ops forces in Somalia as “like hearing from afar the lost chords of ‘America the Beautiful,’” adding that “Seal Team 6 has become a more vivid symbol of the power of the great American idea than positive GDP statistics.”

3. Preparing the World

Tim Geithner and Secretary Clinton have been crisscrossing the globe winning support for Anti-Iranian policies. They have got the whole world scared and uncertain, in part, by selectively leaking information that feeds fear, and reinforces the sense that “we have to do something!”

The tough new sanctions on Iraqi oil in Europe was not expected, and now that Iran is threatening to retaliate by not selling oil to the countries sanctioning them, there will be even more support for UN measure that could lead to military operations. (Especially if the world develops a sense of the “existential threat” that Israel already expresses about Iran’s nuclear program.)

Russia and China remain a problem. They are worried about “regime change.” Note, like in Libya, we never use that term although that was the result of our support for a “humanitarian intervention.”

War may still be averted but the danger of war will dominate the news for the months to come, setting up a psychological background to the election campaign and likely convincing the public that they would be best served by keeping your Administration in office.

Author’s note: While this document is a work of the imagination, it is grounded in real world threats and counter threats and may likely echo some of the real policy rationales and options being debated privately in Washington.

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