

Openly Lying Us Into War With Iran

Lying the World Into War Is Always an Option

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?,
IRAQ REPORT](#)

Picture: Kenneth Pollack

This is from p. 84-5 in [Which Path to Persia?: Options for a New American Strategy toward Iran](#), a June, 2009 book edited and co-authored by Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution:

...absent a clear Iranian act of aggression, American airstrikes against Iran would be unpopular in the region and throughout the world...it would be far more preferable if the United States could cite an Iranian provocation as justification for the airstrikes before launching them. Clearly, the more outrageous, the more deadly, and the more unprovoked the Iranian action, the better off the United States would be. Of course, **it would be very difficult for the United States to goad Iran into such a provocation without the rest of the world recognizing this game**, which would then undermine it. **(One method that would have some possibility of success would be to ratchet up covert regime change efforts in the hope that Tehran would retaliate overtly, or even semi-overtly, which could then be portrayed as an unprovoked act of Iranian aggression.)** ... [T]he use of airstrikes could not be the primary U.S. policy toward Iran...until Iran provided the necessary pretext.

You may remember Pollack from [The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq](#), the 2002 book cited by all the nice liberals who sadly and reluctantly supported war. What you don't remember—because none of the nice liberals mentioned it—is that on p. 364-5 of The Threatening Storm Pollack presented exactly the same option regarding Iraq:

Assembling a [...] coalition would be infinitely easier if the United States could point to a smoking gun with Iraqi fingerprints on it—some new Iraqi outrage that would serve to galvanize international opinion and create the pretext for an invasion...

There are probably [...] courses the United States could take that might prompt Saddam to make a foolish, aggressive move, that would then become the “smoking gun” justifying an invasion. **An aggressive U.S. covert action campaign might provoke Saddam to retaliate overtly, providing a casus belli...**

What matters about this is that Pollack is right at the heart of the Democratic Party's foreign policy establishment, and he's completely comfortable proposing that he and his friends lie the world into war after war in the mideast. (The other authors of *Which Path to Persia?* are Daniel L. Byman, Martin Indyk, Suzanne Maloney, Michael E. O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel.) No

one he hangs around with will find anything jarring about this. And he knows he can count on the media to never mention this option is being openly kicked around before the war starts. (Pollack is Ted Koppel's son-in-law.)

To understand how seriously the U.S. government takes this kind of thing, here's some of the relevant history involving Iraq and Iran:

1. In 1997, a Clinton cabinet member (probably Madeleine Albright) [suggested](#) that the Air Force fly a U-2 so slowly and low over Iraq that Iraq would be able to shoot it down. This would be a "precipitous event—something that would make us look good in the eyes of the world" and enable us to invade.

2. On February 16, 2002, George W. Bush authorized parts of "[Anabasis](#)", a CIA plan to fly Iraqi exiles into southern Iraq, where they would seize a military base in hopes Saddam would fly troops south to retake it. According to one of the CIA operatives involved, "The idea was to create an incident in which Saddam lashes out... you'd have a premise for war: we've been invited in."

3. In 2002, the U.S. and U.K. [doubled their rate of bombing Iraq](#) "in an attempt to provoke Saddam Hussein into giving the allies an excuse for war."

4. On January 31, 2003, in a White House meeting with Tony Blair, Bush [proposed](#) painting a U.S. plane in the colors of the UN in hopes it would draw Iraqi fire, thus providing a pretext to invade.

5. In early 2008, Dick Cheney and friends discussed how to create a casus belli for attacking Iran. One of their [bright ideas](#) was to build some speed boats that looked like the ones belonging to the Iranian navy, put Navy SEALs on them, and then have the SEALs start shooting at American ships. (Note that with this concept we'd give up on secretly goading Iran into responding to our aggression, and just provide both sides of the war ourselves.)

Given that someone like Barry McCaffrey is [privately telling NBC executives](#) that Iran is going to "further escalate" hostilities in next few months, it's a good time to pay attention to all this.

P.S. If you're hungry for more of Kenneth Pollack's acute political insights, this is from *Which Path to Persia?*:

Iranian foreign policy is frequently driven by internal political considerations...More than once, Iran has followed a course that to outsiders appeared self-defeating but galvanized the Iranian people to make far-reaching sacrifices in the name of seemingly quixotic goals.

And this is from *The Threatening Storm*:

Saddam's foreign policy history is littered with bizarre decisions, poor judgement, and catastrophic miscalculations...Even when Saddam does consider a problem at length...his own determination to interpret geopolitical calculations to suit what he wants to believe anyway lead him to construct bizarre scenarios that he convinces himself are highly likely...

[100 pages later]

Imagine how different the Middle East and the world would be if a new Iraqi state were

stable, prosperous, and a force for progress in the region...Imagine if we could rebuild Iraq as a model of what a modern Arab state could be...Invading Iraq might not just be our least bad alternative, it potentially could be our best course of action.

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