

Petraeus and Presidential politics

Setting the stage for a war with Iran

By [Michael Carmichael](#)

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From 1964 until 1968, General William Westmoreland presented a constant stream of shining, buoyant and uplifting assessments of the potential for American victory in Vietnam. When Westmoreland became Commander of US forces in Vietnam, there were a mere 15,000 troops with boots on the ground. After four years of Westmoreland's misguided optimism, 535,000 troops had their boots ankle deep in the quagmire of the Vietnamese jungles. In an age long before the internet, Westmoreland's positive messaging for increasing America's commitment to military intervention in Vietnam received massive media attention and bolstered public support for what would become an abysmally depressing war.

Today, General David Petraeus will borrow a page from the playbook of Westmoreland. In his testimony to Congress, Petraeus will present his case that the surge has worked, is working and will continue to work long into what the General will portray as a blissful future. Predictably, the General will demonize the nation and government of Iran as inimical to American policy in Iraq. Citing reports of Iranian battlefield commanders fighting alongside Shia insurgents in Basra, Petraeus' testimony is being designed to create public demand in the United States for expanding the war in order to resuscitate the presidential prospects of Senator John McCain, the neocons' best hope for realizing their vision of the future - another century of American imperialism, economic decline and cultural disintegration.

According to the designers of this messaging strategy, ie the usual suspects: Rove, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, the neocons and W - the American public will produce their typical Pavlovian reaction and demand a massive attack in the form of a violent shock and awe bombing raid targeting Iranian strategic, nuclear and military centers. Fortuitously, this plan has been on the drawing boards at the Pentagon for the past four years.

A US flotilla is in position in the Persian Gulf. Armed with nuclear warheads on their Sidewinder missiles, US submarines slide soundlessly past the straits of Hormuz to take up their positions near the coast of Iran to participate in the planetary equivalent of electroshock therapy. The objective of this series of shocks is not the populace of Iran, nor even the greater Middle East, but the American body politic that appears to have grown bored and troubled over the deepening abyss of war in Iraq. In the minds of the neocons, the American people have grown complacent, cowardly and even craven in their attitude to the glorious war in Iraq. A sharp lesson in shock and awe ferocity aimed at a nefarious enemy, a spoke on the Axis of Evil, should awaken America from its dangerous slumber.

In his recent top-secret conversations with King Abdulla of Saudi Arabia, Vice President Cheney informed the king of the forthcoming attack on Iran that could produce nuclear fallout across a broad arc of the region. Shortly after Cheney's departure, the king informed the public of the threat to their national security and ordered immediate preparations against nuclear fallout. The nuclear material can emanate from either the US attack or the explosion of Iranian nuclear sites - or both.

To underline the seriousness of the threat, Israel has warned Iran that they will take massive retaliatory action should they find themselves under attack. Coming as it does from the world's third most powerful nuclear nation, the Iranians have not ignored Israel's bellicose threat. For their part, Iran has proposed a regional missile shield to protect their citizens against a US or Israeli attack - a harbinger of another astronomically expensive arms race of global proportions.

When Petraeus walks into the Congressional hearings, he will face questioning from all three remaining presidential hopefuls. McCain will present no problem for the general. They are reading from the same script. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama will be on the global stage and under the heat of a huge spotlight. Their public support is predicated on their opposition to US policy in Iraq and the region.

Their performances will set the stage for the unfolding of the scenery for the next act. The Republican plan is to envelope either or both of the Democrats in their web of deceit to legitimize their military failure by expanding the quagmire of naked aggression that is now understood as the Iraq War.

The scene is set. Petraeus will lay out the pretext for war with Iran. McCain will parrot his agreement. Then the spotlight will shine on Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama. Most international pundits believe that both Democrats will acquiesce to Petraeus' strident demands for the expansion of the war. The world will be watching, and so will the American electorate.

If either of the Democrats swallows Petraeus' bait, it will be the end of their personal aspirations to the presidency. If both do, it will mark the beginning of the end of the Democratic Party as we have known it - and the beginning of a fundamental political realignment in America.



GENERAL PETRAEUS OR GENERAL WESTMORELAND?

SOURCES

[Noam Chomsky, Both Parties well to the right of the population on major issues](#)

[Petraeus Testimony Next Week Will Signal Iran Attack](#)

[John McCain's chart-topping single "Bomb Iran"](#)

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Articles by: [Michael Carmichael](#)

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