

Saving A President

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Region: [USA](#)

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In his first year in office, the widely-followed Cook Political Report had this assessment of George Bush's early months as president: "Looking back over his first five months in office, President George W. Bush and his administration started off to a strong, fast start but now, his future seems far less certain. Not only are Bush's overall job approval ratings slumping, but his disapproval ratings are climbing (and) after a strong start, the last three months have been less than auspicious for this new President. The good news....is that they have plenty of time before the next presidential (or) mid-term elections. The bad news is that they have a lot of repair work to do and had better get started." They wasted little time doing it, but no one (at least the public) knew in June what lay ahead in September.

George Bush entered office with an approval rating around 50%. It rose a little at first, then slumped moderately as the Cook Report suggested. Everything changed dramatically September 11. Bush's rating skyrocketed instantly hitting a temporary high around 90% and remained above 80% through year end. That momentous day transformed a mediocre president overnight with some observers incredibly comparing him to Lincoln, FDR and Churchill combined.

It was laughable then and ludicrous now for a pathetic caricature of a president and man so hated he's barely able to hang on to avoid what growing vocal numbers in the country demand - his head and removal from office by impeachment along with Vice-President Cheney.

Today again, George Bush finds himself in a precarious position at the least. He insists on maintaining a failed policy a growing majority in the country wants ended. As a result, his approval rating is scraping rock bottom in polls likely "engineered" to keep it from winning all-time bottom honors as the lowest ever for a sitting president. Dick Cheney is less fortunate, however, at a bottom-scraping 12% that's the lowest ever for a president or vice-president by far and then some.

With that in mind, here's how the Cook Political Report assesses things as of June 29, 2007: "...after six and a half years of George W. Bush's presidency, the Republican 'brand' has been badly tarnished. As a result, it would take an enormous amount of luck for Republicans to hold the White House or win back control of the Senate or House, let alone (do all three)....the GOP (will need) a long and painful rebuilding process (and) recapturing the White House or congressional majorities (is) unlikely in the near future." The report suggests a possible Republican apocalypse even though it notes Democrats have failed to end the Iraq war, have only delivered on one of their six major platform planks (increasing the federal minimum wage), and are scorned as well.

With 18 months to go, what's a president to do to hang on, run out the clock, and leave

office through the normal front door process of his term expiring, not the result of the Senate voting him out earlier by “the (required) Concurrence of two-thirds of the Members present” – hard as that is to do as history shows.

Politicians know, and especially presidents, when in trouble – change the subject. It’s being changed by ignoring reality, aided by healthy offerings of the usual kinds of industrial strength corporate media hyperventilating.

It features George Bush and his supportive generalissimo and other top brass in Iraq in the lead. They continue asking for more time, insist the disastrous “surge” is working, say it just needs a chance, and that withdrawing too soon would trigger a bloodbath on the order of the Cambodian killing fields according to an earlier preposterous April claim. Unmentioned is the continued bloodbath caused by the US presence that won’t end until all American and other hostile foreign forces are withdrawn.

That won’t happen according to recent reports with the National Review Online and other sources recently saying the administration intends to escalate its strength on the ground, not curtail it. More troops may be brought in, and the Air Force is increasing its hardware. The powerful B 1 bomber is back (capable of carrying 24 ton bombs) and making multiple daily and/or nightly strikes. A squadron of A-10 “Warthog” attack planes were sent as well along with additional F-16C Fighting Falcons. Bombing runs have intensified dramatically, and the level of violence, deaths and destruction overall is increasing. The Navy is contributing as well with the USS Enterprise sent to the Gulf that may or may not replace one of the two Fifth Fleet carriers already there.

In recent months, the Air Force also doubled its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) efforts using Predator drones (capable of striking targets as well as spying), high altitude U2s, and sophisticated AWACS planes. It all points to one thing on the ground and back home. Congress can debate all it wants. No Iraq withdrawal is planned, the conflict is being escalated, and the only issue on the table is selling the present course to the public with Congress already signed on showing debate is for show, not for real. The hard sell is beginning by the timeworn, yet tried and true, sure-fire method of scaring people to death to go along and in this case threatening them as well.

George Bush’s Continuing War on the First Amendment

On July 17, George Bush issued another of his many presidential “one-man” decrees titled “Executive Order: Blocking Property of Certain Persons Who Threaten Stabilization Efforts in Iraq.” More than any other chief executive in the nation’s history, this President abuses this practice egregiously as another example of his contempt for the law.

Economist and journalist Ferdinand Lundberg (1905 – 1995) wrote in his extremely important and revealing book “Cracks in the Constitution:” The US Constitution “nowhere implicitly or explicitly gives a President (the) power (to make) new law” by issuing “one-man, often far-reaching” executive order decrees. However, Lundberg explains “the President in the American constitutional system is very much a de facto king....(he is) by far the most powerful formally constituted political officer on earth.” He has “vast power (and) stands in a position midway between a collective executive (like the British system) and an absolute dictator.” Lundberg wrote those words over 27 years ago when George Bush was busy making millions (the result of friendly bailouts) from successive oil business ventures that flopped.

George Bush's family connections delivered for him in business, in spite of his ineptitude, and finally gave him the grand prize of the presidency he exploited fully ever since. For him and those around him, the law is just an artifact to be used, abused or ignored at his pleasure. He earlier usurped "Unitary Executive" power to claim the law is what he says it is and in six and half years in office issued more signing statements (over 800) than all past presidents combined. The result is he expanded presidential power (already immense as Lundberg explained) at the expense of the other two branches by shifting it dangerously toward unlimited executive authority, otherwise known as tyranny.

The Constitution has no provisions for "Unitary Executive" power or the right of the chief executive to issue signing statements that hasn't deterred this President from doing as he pleases. There's also no authorization for issuing Executive Orders, as just noted, beyond the following vague language Lundberg explained constitutes the "essence of presidential power....in a single sentence."

Specifically, Article II, section 1 reads: "The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America." That simple statement, easily passed over and misunderstood, means the near-limitless power of this office "is concentrated in the hands of one man." Article II, section 3 then almost nonchalantly adds: "The President shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed" without saying Presidents are virtually empowered to make laws as well as execute them even though nothing in the Constitution specifically permits this practice.

George Bush takes full advantage within and outside the law. His July 17 Executive Order is another case in point, but a particularly egregious and dangerous one. It starts off: The President's power stems from "the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America" as well as the International Emergency Economic Powers Act he invokes as well. The order then continues:

— "...due to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by acts of violence threatening the peace and stability of Iraq and undermining efforts to promote economic reconstruction and political reform in Iraq and to provide humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people," George Bush usurped authority to criminalize the anti-war movement, make the First Amendment right to protest it illegal, and give himself the right to seize the assets of persons violating this order.

In a message to Congress on the same date, George Bush then stated:

— "...I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order blocking property of persons determined to have committed, or to pose a significant risk of committing, an act or acts of violence that have the purpose or effect of threatening the peace or stability of Iraq or the Government of Iraq or undermining efforts to promote economic reconstruction and political reform in Iraq or to provide humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people."

In effect, George Bush, on his say alone and in violation of the Constitution, criminalized dissent July 17, 2007. By so doing, he shifted the nation one step closer to full-blown tyranny with other tightening measures sure to follow this one. The dominant media reported virtually nothing about this nor will they explain or voice concern when law-abiding Americans are arrested and punished for protesting a criminal administration's illegal foreign wars. Instead, a full-court press publicly-aired effort is underway to justify them that

provides clues for what may lie ahead.

Scare-Mongering Heats Up

On July 7, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum appeared on the Hugh Hewitt radio program. He was introduced by the host as “one of our favorite Americans,” leaving no doubt where Hewitt stands. Santorum came to skewer his former colleagues’ lack of resolve to stay the course in Iraq, no matter how hopeless things are on the ground. But he took the opportunity to go further by suggesting that “confronting Iran (is) an absolute lynchpin for our success in that region,” that 9/11 taught us “Islamists” must be confronted, that they want to “conquer that region of the world (and) will soon end up on our doorstep (if not stopped, and that) between now and November, a lot of things are going to happen (to shape) “a very different” (public view) of this war....because...of some very unfortunate events (coming) like we’re seeing unfold in the UK.”

Does Rick Santorum know something the public doesn’t, and was he given permission to leak it on-air? Another clue came July 10 from DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. He practically told a Chicago Tribune editorial board meeting another major terrorist attack is coming later this summer because he has a “gut feeling” about a period ahead of increased risk. Basing his assessment on undisclosed intelligence (as always) and earlier “terrorist patterns in Europe,” he added “Summertime seems to be appealing to them (and) We worry that they are rebuilding their activities. I believe we are entering a period this summer of increased risk.”

Chertoff then appeared on a number of TV programs to itemize his “gut feeling” factors, including taking full advantage of the likely staged June 29 London car bomb discoveries and June 30 follow-up Glasgow airport incident that may have only been an unfortunate accident. With no credible evidence backing his claims, Chertoff, nonetheless, said “Europe could become a platform for an attack against this country.” The UK incidents may, in fact, have been staged to stoke fear in Britain and here in advance of a major homeland terror event to come.

The New York Times’ Maureen Dowd tried making light of Chertoff’s comments saying he sounds “more like a meteorologist than the man charged with keeping us safe.” Chertoff’s job isn’t to “keep us safe,” Dowd should know better, and her attempt at humor isn’t funny. These comments are to be taken seriously. They were made to signal a changed political climate ahead brought on by a one or more likely upcoming terror events, possibly major ones. It would be to resuscitate a failing president the way 9/11 did earlier, even though no one this time would dare suggest George Bush combines Lincoln, FDR and Churchill resurrected or anything resembling it.

More Scare-Mongering

Quick to play their lead hyperventilating role, the corporate media is all over the notion of a summer terror surprise to prepare the public in advance for what may be coming and to accept the consequences of a police state America in response. ABC News may have been first to hype the story citing a new FBI analysis of Al-Queda messages warning of “their strategic intent to strike the US homeland and US interests worldwide (that) should not be discounted as merely deceptive noise.”

Then on July 15, “Enemy Number One” bin Laden coincidentally appeared in an undated

online videotape. It was titled "Winds of Martyrdom" and presented to look new with bin Laden saying "The happy (person) is the one chosen by Allah to be a martyr." In fact, it looked like old footage or pieced together segments of earlier ones repackaged to look fresh and released to the public two days after the Senate doubled the bounty on bin Laden to \$50 million. It was also three days after AP reported July 12 that US intelligence analysts concluded Al-Queda has rebuilt its operating capability to levels unseen since right before 9/11 and is "renewing efforts to sneak terror plotters into (the) US" adding to numbers of them already here.

AP also mentioned a draft National Intelligence Estimate "expected (and now released to confirm) an increasingly worrisome portrait of al-Queda's ability to use its base along the Pakistan-Afghan border to launch and inspire attacks, even though (other) Bush administration officials say the US is safer (now) nearly six years into the war on terror." Hying the threat further, AP mentioned key "classified" assessments in the report claiming Al-Queda "probably (is) still pursuing chemical, biological or nuclear weapons and would use them if its operatives developed sufficient capability." Further, the US faces "a persistent and evolving (Islamic) terrorist threat" for the next three years.

In a clearly timed and motivated political statement, The (unclassified) National Intelligence Estimate "key judgments" were released July 17, combining assessments from 16 Bush administration spy agencies. It's titled "The Terrorist Threat to the US Homeland," It presented the findings below, including reworked earlier ones, in addition to those mentioned above:

- Al-Queda has "regenerated key elements of its Homeland attack capability;"
- Iraq strengthened Al-Queda that will "leverage the contacts and capabilities" to attack the US homeland;
- Al-Queda and its operatives in Iraq will "energize the broader Sunni extremist community (and help to) recruit and indoctrinate (new) operatives;
- In spite of Al-Queda's regrouping, US worldwide counterterrorism efforts since 2001 have constrained Islamic extremists from attacking US soil; nonetheless, Al-Queda remains a serious future threat and is likely to focus on high-profile political, economic and infrastructure targets for maximum casualties, visually dramatic destruction, economic aftershocks and public fear;
- Al-Queda restored its ability to attack US soil and operates freely in the Pakistan Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA);
- Other Muslim and non-Muslim terrorist groups also pose a danger abroad and may consider attacking here. Lebanon's Hezbollah topped the list of Muslim groups mentioned. Earth Liberation Front, called a violent environmental group, also made the list.

At his July 12 news conference, George Bush raised the specter of Al-Queda's threat to the US citing the above-mentioned intelligence report as supposed evidence. He then resurrected a timeworn long ago discredited golden oldie saying "The same folks that are bombing innocent people in Iraq were the ones who attacked us in America on September 11. That's why what happens in Iraq matters to security here at home." Unmentioned anywhere in the mainstream, of course, is the long-standing relationship between "Enemy

Number One” bin Laden, Al-Queda and US and allied intelligence and how they’re used in the fraudulent “war on terrorism” to manipulate and scare the public enough to go along with anything.

These comments, published assessments from The National Intelligence Estimate, inflammatory remarks from officials like Michael Chertoff, and accompanying dominant media hyperventilating effectively stoke public fear and may point to a major terror attack ahead on US soil. It will trigger a Code Red Alert if it happens signaling the highest terrorist threat level followed by the likely suspension of the Constitution, imposition of martial law, and end of the republic. The rule of law will be suspended, dissent no longer will be tolerated (it’s already illegal), the military and other security forces will be involved on US soil in strength if needed, and an unmasked full-blown fascist police state will, in fact, henceforth exist.

It’s arrival may be closer than most imagine in an effort to save the Bush presidency that continues to weaken and begs for a way out of its dilemma. It worked earlier on 9/11 and may soon be unveiled again, even more convincingly, for a president desperate enough to try anything as a Hail Mary scheme to finish out his term, leave office on his own accord, and refurbish what’s left of his tarnished image.

This is what our military adventurism and single-minded pursuit of empire has gotten us. It’s not to be taken lightly, for if it arrives it’ll be too late. The time to unmask and stop it is now and quickly as Michael Chertoff’s pointing to late summer is fast approaching.

A “Catastrophic Homeland Emergency” to Justify Attacking Iran

The Bush administration’s pointing to Iran as a threat to US security is as baseless as the phony WMD and dangerous dictator claims were for war with Iraq. It’s because Washington has wanted regime change in the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution toppled the US-reinstalled Shah Reza Pahlavi to power following the CIA-instigated coup in 1953 against democratically elected Mohammed Mossadegh.

The Bush administration stepped up the current effort earlier citing Iran’s legal commercial nuclear program as a thinly veiled pretext without ever mentioning that Washington encouraged Iranians to develop their commercial nuclear industry during the reign of the Shah. That can’t be revealed because doing it would unmask the hypocrisy of the current belligerency and scare-mongering.

Through its usual practice of bribes and bullying, the administration got the Security Council to act in its behalf. It passed UN Resolution 1696 in July, 2006 demanding Iran suspend uranium enrichment by August 31. When it refused, Resolution 1737 was passed in December imposing limited sanctions. Resolution 1747 then tightened them further in March, 2007. It imposed a ban on arms sales and expanded a freeze on the country’s assets, in spite of Iranian officials’ insistence (with no evidence to disprove them) their nuclear program is entirely peaceful and fully in accord with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Nonetheless, harsh rhetoric out of Washington continues with George Bush pushing for additional sanctions (against another Iranian bank and a large military-owned engineering firm) while hyping the concocted threat of Iran’s commercial program that’s no different from those of other NPT signatory states. Iran has been patient but earlier refused to allow

IAEA inspectors to visit the Arak heavy water reactor until now. In a spirit of cooperation and facing a possible preemptive US and/or Israeli attack, it's scheduled to take place before the end of July. Iran also scaled back its enrichment program in a show of good faith and agreed to answer questions regarding past experiments at its facilities to defuse the threat of tougher sanctions and avoid a possible attack that's real and may be imminent.

As Iran shows a willingness to cooperate and prove it threatens no other country, the Bush administration renounced NPT and its crucial Article VI pledging nuclear nations make "good faith" efforts to eliminate their arsenals because having them heightens the risk they'll be used, endangering the planet. While Iran wants peace and nuclear non-proliferation, the Bush administration pursues a reckless agenda including the following:

- It claims the right to develop new type nuclear weapons, not eliminate any now on hand.
- It renounced NPT claiming the right to develop and test new weapons.
- It abandoned the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM).
- It rescinded and subverted the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.
- It refused to consider a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty to prevent nuclear bombs being added to present stockpiles already dangerously too high.
- It spends more on the military than the rest of the world combined with large future increases planned, starting in FY 2008 up for debate and sure to pass.
- It claims the right to wage preventive wars under the illegal and frightening doctrine of "anticipatory self-defense" using first-strike nuclear weapons.

While Iran, in fact, threatens no one, America threatens the planet, and the world community stays silent in the face of a potential disaster if the US wages nuclear war because it can get away with it. What other nation will dare challenge the only remaining superpower in spite of the potential horrendous consequences from such a reckless act.

Scaring the Public to Death - Act II

Another earlier discredited campaign is now heating up again as well even though British foreign secretary, David Milliband, discounted its credibility in a July 8 Financial Times interview. It features US claims and hostile rhetoric that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds Force is providing weapons as well as funding, training and arming Shiite and other resistance fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan with no credible evidence to prove it because there is none. It added "Quds Force (and) Hezbollah instructors trained approximately 20 to 60 Iraqis at a time" at camps near Tehran. It's also using "Lebanese Hezbollah...as a proxy (or) surrogate in Iraq."

New York Times hawkish defense reporter Michael Gordon (picking up where the disgraced Judith Miller left off) concluded from this "that Iran has been engaged in a proxy war against American and Iraqi government forces for years." That kind of belligerent language on the New York Times front page adds fuel to the self-defense rationale for a future military assault against the Iranian state based on spurious accounts like Gordon's as justification.

It points toward and seems to confirm what the London Guardian reported a "well-placed"

Washington source recently said – that George “Bush is not going to leave office with Iran still in limbo.” It’s Bush’s lips moving but Dick Cheney’s words coming out as he and those close to him (like Iran-Contra criminal, rabid Israel supporter, and deputy national security advisor Elliott Abrams) have long favored direct military action against Iran, including the use of nuclear weapons.

According to Guardian sources, “The balance (in Washington) has tilted” with George Bush on board with his vice-president, who, as insiders know, calls all the important shots in the nation’s capitol. The Guardian quoted International Institute for Strategic Studies director of studies Patrick Cronin saying “Cheney has limited capital left (a likely dubious claim),” and if he uses it for one aim (like attacking Iran) “he could still have an impact.” The US has a formidable strike force in the Gulf alone to do it with two carrier groups, 50 or more warships with nuclear weapons, hundreds of planes and contingents of Marines and Navy personnel.

Battle plans have long been in place (and are likely updated as needed) under code or operational name TIRANNT for Theater Iran Near Term. If an attack comes, it will be from the Gulf Naval task force and may also include long-range bombers and other warplanes and missiles based in Iraq and strategic locations like Diego Garcia within easy striking distance of targeted sites. The possibility of it happening is frightening as under a top secret “Interim Global Strike Alert Order” and CONPLAN (contingency/concept plan) 8022, Washington claims the right to preemptively strike targets anywhere in the world using so-called low-yield, extremely powerful, nuclear bunker buster weapons with Iran the apparent first target of choice.

The only good news from the Guardian (if correct) is that “No decision on military action is expected until next year” with the state department continuing for now to pursue a diplomatic route – that may just be a diversionary smoke screen for what’s planned ahead.

Reuters reported July 17 that US Ambassador in Kabul William Wood said “There are clearly some munitions coming out of Iran going into the hands of the Taliban. We believe that the quantity and quality of those munitions are such that the Iranian government must know about it.” Defense Secretary Robert Gates made a similar claim a month earlier along with other Washington reports of Iran aiding Shia, other “militant” fighters and “Al-Queda” elements in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

Tehran rejects these accusations as “baseless and illogical” saying the obvious in reply – that the US military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan and Washington’s one-sided support for Israel causes instability in both regions. The US wants a pretext to strike the Islamic Republic, but the Iranian government isn’t about to provide one. In fact, it’s doing the opposite by cooperating with the IAEA and continues saying it’s willing to engage in constructive diplomacy with the Bush administration.

On July 16, Iran indicated another round of security-related talks over Iraq with Washington is possible in the “near future” showing again it means what it says. The problem is the Bush administration does not. It continues using hard line tactics preferring belligerence and duplicity with Iran that’s typical of the way it does business overall. It’s willing to negotiate on its own terms only while posing the threat of a military option or economic sanctions against nations unwilling to go along. At the same time, Iran knows CIA and special forces operatives have been engaged in covert activities in the country for many months to destabilize the ruling government.

In addition, Washington has attempted to build an anti-Iranian Saudi-Jordanian-Egyptian coalition in the region to further undermine Tehran's influence. The state department has also pressured international banks and other corporations to sever relations with Iran to make the country "scream" the way the Nixon administration did it to Salvador Allende's Chile and the Bush administration and Israel are now doing it to the democratically elected Hamas government in Gaza. Iran, of course, like Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, is richly endowed with the world's most in-demand commodity and can keep a good revenue stream coming no matter what.

The Israel Factor

When it comes to Iran, Israel is always part of the equation. On July 11, the Senate again showed it's Israeli-occupied territory (along with the House) by passing 97 - 0 the Lieberman-sponsored S.Amendment 2073 to S.Amdt 2011 to HR 1585 (National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008). It calls for censuring Iran for its complicity in killing US soldiers in Iraq. It was a clear warning to Tehran claiming unstated evidence its government is using proxy forces to attack US troops on the ground. It follows months of accusations from American commanders that Iran is supplying various kinds of weapons to Iraqi resistance groups with no clear evidence to prove it.

Israel is in the mix, too, and has warned repeatedly of an attack on Iran as well with prime minister Ehud Olmert earlier in the year saying his country couldn't risk another "existential threat" with a clear reference to the Nazi holocaust. By it, he and other high-level Israeli political and military officials point to Iran's commercial nuclear program, falsely claiming Tehran is fanatically and ideologically committed to destroying the Jewish state. It's nonsense, but it works by stoking fears to get the Israeli public and world opinion on its side for whatever military action is planned in "self-defense." Other Israeli national security officials have a contrary view, but their assessment gets no press attention. They believe the Iranian government is rational and not about to wage war with Israel, the US, or any other nation.

Israel and the US know it, but neither state says so publicly. If Iran attacked Israel, it would be committing suicide. It would guarantee a full-scale US and Israeli response, possibly with nuclear weapons, that would devastate the country. In addition, no one mentions that after the ancient Persian empire became Iran in 1935, the country obeyed international laws, never occupied another country, and never attacked or threatened to attack another nation beyond occasional border skirmishes far short of war. It's only full-scale conflict was defensive in response to Saddam Hussein's US-backed, equipped and financially aided September, 1980 invasion. The evidence today is overwhelming. Iran threatens no other nation and will only defend itself if attacked.

It may have to and formally complained to the Security Council criticizing Ehud Olmert and Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz's threatening comments. Mofaz made his remarks on a June Washington visit and Olmert gave his in April to the German publication Focus, which he later denied when quoted verbatim. Each official spoke of a possible Israeli attack against Iran's commercial nuclear facilities with the Israeli prime minister saying Iran's nuclear program could be struck by 1000 cruise missiles launched over 10 days. He added "It is impossible perhaps to destroy the entire nuclear program but it would be possible to damage it in such a way that it would be set back for years." One thousand cruise missiles, some with nuclear warheads, would set the whole country back for years, or most any other one.

On July 11, Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Avigdor Lieberman lived up to his notorious reputation as a reckless super-hawk with extremist fascist ideas. He told Israeli Army Radio he got US and European backing for an Israeli military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities following a meeting with NATO and European Union officials. He said the message he got was that America and Europe are tied down in Iraq and Afghanistan and that Israel should proceed on its own to "prevent the (Iranian) threat herself."

Israel may have two fronts in mind according to IDF Major General Eyal Ben-Reuven, deputy commander of Israeli forces in last summer's disastrous war in Lebanon. He spoke at an Institute for National Security Studies conference July 16 assessing the summer, 2006 Lebanon war saying the IDF is "preparing itself for an all-out war (with Syria), and this is a major change in the military's working premise" following last year's humiliating defeat at the hands of Hezbollah. General Ben-Reuven said when war breaks out, Syria will suffer mass military and civilian casualties as the IDF is training for a swift and overwhelming invasion "to knock out the areas where (Syrian) missiles are launched....as quickly as possible." He added "By preparing for an all-out war, we can also deal with Palestinian terror" signaling a possible attack on Hamas in Gaza that may happen at the same time combined with one on Hezbollah as well.

Haaretz reported July 18 that the UN may be complicit in aiding Israel's scheme to show Syria's a threat to regional security as justification for a planned attack. Syrian UN Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari complained in a letter to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that Israel is fabricating evidence that his country is supposedly smuggling weapons to Lebanon. He specifically singled out the Secretary-General's envoy to Lebanon and Syria, Terje Roed-Larsen, who's long served Western and Israeli interests. His earlier report backed Israel's unsubstantiated claims that weapons are entering Lebanon through Syria, implying the Syrian government is sending them. Ja'afari also complained about Israel's border violations, illegal overflight spying missions in Lebanese airspace, and its photographing commercial truck deliveries claiming they're smuggling weapons.

This information suggests Israel and the US are targeting all their regional enemies at once with possible plans extending from Iraq to Iran into Syria and also Hezbollah in South Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. A scheme may be planned much like the way a local mafia don eliminates his enemies to consolidate power. In this case, it's a global godfather and its regional junior (but powerful and influential) partner doing what a local don would say is taking care of family business. The net result may be to set the whole Middle East aflame, destroy what little influence Washington has left there, jeopardize homeland security, and heighten the risk for retaliation against US and Western interests everywhere.

It can only worsen further if Pakistan is targeted as well. It may happen, with or without President Pervez Musharraf's permission, because of claimed Al-Qaeda safehaven tribal areas in the country posing a regional and wider threat. The Wall Street Journal reported "US policy makers (are) under pressure to eradicate this haven (even though doing it) could spark a local backlash strong enough to topple (the leader) President Bush has called Washington's strongest ally in the fight against al Qaeda." The New York Times sounded the same theme saying "...American officials have been meeting in recent weeks to discuss what some said was....an aggressive new strategy (including) public and covert elements (and) some new (secret) measures to avoid embarrassing General Musharraf."

Looking Ahead

With 18 months left in office and his presidency foundering, George Bush is like a cornered animal desperate enough to try anything to survive. Surrounded by a dwindling, but still potent, number of hard liners, this article suggests a disturbing scenario ahead that bodes ill for the nation and world if it happens. It appears the Bush administration's scheme involves changing the subject by scare-mongering that may be followed by staging one or more major home-based terror attacks on the order of 9/11, then waging war with Iran on the phony pretext Tehran threatens US and regional security. Further strikes may also be planned against the tribal areas of Pakistan along with backing Israel's intentions against Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas. These will be ominous developments if they happen as explained above. In an effort to survive and finish out their term in office, George Bush and Dick Cheney may be willing to gamble everything for what, in the end, can't be achieved.

An earlier CIA assessment points out part of the problem. It was blunt and frightening saying if the US attacks Iran, Southern Shia Iraq will light up like a candle and explode uncontrollably throughout the country. It will also likely incite Saudi Shiites who happen to be in the most oil-rich part of the Kingdom, but it very possibly could include the entire Muslim world in armed rebellion against anything American and Western. It's heading toward that kind of showdown now.

The US is already a pariah state, losing influence as its recklessness intensifies. Take away its military strength, and it faces an unfriendly world, likely to be less receptive to its demands if it can't back them up with the muscle it has now or shies away from using what it has. That's a future possibility, though, not a present one. More immediate is the threat of nuclear war, the end of the republic, and what little is left of constitutional law. That's along with a nation spending itself into bankruptcy and already, by some measures and analysis, at an impossible to repay \$80 trillion or more in unfunded future entitlements and other liabilities. That's the assessment of economist Laurence Kotlikoff in his 2006 appraisal for the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank in an article titled "Is the United States Bankrupt?"

It won't happen as long as Fed Chairman Bernanke keeps printing money at the same reckless double digit pace Alan Greenspan did before him. They and other Fed chairmen are beholden to the same banking cartel and Wall Street establishment that owns and runs the Federal Reserve for their benefit, not ours. Their scheme is Ponzi-like to monetize continued prosperity as long as the string holds out that can't forever as former Nixon chief economic advisor Herb Stein once explained earlier. But the longer it does, the worse the outcome when the inevitable end comes with the public set up for the hardest fall like always.

The present domestic economic turbulence and threatening credit crunch (with global implications) is the result of the following that's bad enough but no disaster yet:

- slumping housing,
- fallout from recklessly leveraged speculation in hedge funds and on Wall Street overall with the Federal Reserve fueling it all,
- troubled collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) linked to sinking sub-prime mortgage valuations,
- once AAA-rated residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS), now downgraded,
- sinking sub-prime loans,

- the multi-trillion dollar financial derivatives market speculation Warren Buffet calls “time bombs” and “financial WMDs”,
- junk bonds getting “junkier,”
- dollar weakness,
- inflation much higher than reported and rising because of years of over-spending, over-borrowing and under-taxing,
- and other potential near and intermediate-term financial trouble sure to surprise if it comes.

So far, it’s cyclical noise compared to a greater secular meltdown ahead from built-up financial excesses, peak oil, global warming, intensifying ecological disasters, permanent wars on the world, and the full-blown emergence of homeland tyranny.

This writer takes issue with others who think America is currently in an economic meltdown. Where there’s strong agreement, however, is that one lies ahead, no one knows when precisely, it’ll likely surprise when it arrives, and it may strike like Armageddon when it hits making The Great Depression look tame by comparison and last even longer.

For now, though, removing the criminal class from Washington, restoring the rule of law, saving the republic, avoiding further wars, and ending the current ones is job one. Failure to do it may mean whatever’s ahead won’t matter. It’ll be too late long before it arrives. Those who care about these things and see the threat better enlist others, do more than complain about it, and act in time collectively to stop it. It can only come from the bottom up, never the other way.

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