

US may be seeking provocation to launch a war against Iran

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-[T]wo weeks before the last US elections in 2008, Vice President Joe Biden went on record as saying that there were several scenarios for a certain generated crisis, to wit, a war. The Americans will have to tighten their belts. At first they won't understand why all of that is needed. But they'll approve everything eventually. Among other places, Biden localized the scenario in the Middle East.

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- A military conflict with a state possessing fairly good armaments, a population of over 70 million, and a trained army will be grave and long-term. No one can predict what its consequences will be.

US rhetoric on Iran and its efforts to involve Russia is a “dangerous precedent” that may indicate that Washington is seeking a pretext to launch a war, career diplomat Dmitry Ryurikov* has told RT.

On September 22, Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev signed a decree which bans deliveries of S-300 missile systems to Iran. Called “On Measures to Implement Resolution 1929 of June 9, 2010 of the UN Security Council,” the document prohibits any transit across Russia and the transfer to Iran of all types of combat tanks, armored personnel carriers, large-caliber artillery systems, warplanes, helicopter gunships, warships, missiles or missile systems as defined in the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

Dmitry Ryurikov, a diplomat who served for long periods in Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, has shared his view on the issue with RT - its timing, possible consequences and the general situation around Iran.

RT: Medvedev signed the decree to the effect that Russia began implementing the UN July sanctions. Why was the decree signed precisely now?

Dmitry Ryurikov: The sanctions announcement was no news. The decision was accepted and all work involving arms deliveries was stopped earlier.

I would point to the fact that the signing of the decree is timed to coincide with the current UN General Assembly that is being attended by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who is causing displeasure by his extensive media appearances. He was invited by Larry King. He granted an interview to RT and others. Whether it is a chance coincidence, I wouldn't know. The US media noted that Mr. Ahmadinejad became a hero of the day and was outperforming his opponents. He urged President Obama several times to have a public meeting with him at the General Assembly in the presence of representatives of other countries and to discuss all issues that were causing questions. This, of course, couldn't fail to be an irritant. It was at this point that Russia's announcement was made, which, however, had in it nothing new.

RT: Why did Russia sign sanctions that could go against its own economic interests?

DR: Obviously, Russia believed that joining the sanctions was more to its benefit than having relations with Iran in that sphere.

RT: What's Russia's benefit? It would have been paid \$1 billion for its S-300 systems. Iran intended to offer Russia a commission for another 18 atomic stations. Now its rivals will be ticked to take over the orders.

DR: In all evidence, calculations of possible benefits and losses were made. The losses are obvious. Where benefits are concerned, they have not been yet outlined. This way or other, it's the business of our current foreign policy planners. It'll become clear later whether they were right or wrong in their planning.

RT: What losses are more painful? Image? Money?

DR: It depends on what point of view you choose. The US, on the contrary, sees this step as beneficial for Russia. It can only welcome the step. The Iranian reaction, as is natural, was diametrically opposite.

[What the US will end up with if it attacks Iran:

- the attacker's facilities will become legitimate targets
- the war will be neither easy, nor rapid
- the consequences for the US, the world, the region and Israel are hard to calculate]

RT: The US welcomed Russia's move. Right after that, media reported that the Iranian and US sides met in New York.

DR: I would like to believe that this event really took place and that it was not the last one. If President Obama didn't respond to President Ahmadinejad's appeal to meet in New York, at least their advisers did by starting negotiations. After all, claims regarding preemptive strikes at Iran's nuclear facilities are a reality. Both in the US and Israel, there are people who would like these strikes to be delivered. US generals have been reporting lately that they are ready to launch them.

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war. Thus, the situation remains perilous. Not long ago, Secretary of State Clinton practically called for a regime change in Iran. Tensions never subside.

RT: What is holding the United States back regardless of its aggressive rhetoric?

DR: It needs a pretext. Iran's nuclear program theme, no matter how much it is belabored by the media, the IAEA and the UN, provides no such pretexts because nothing has been proved.

Let me remind you that two weeks before the last US elections in 2008, Vice President Joe Biden went on record as saying that there were several scenarios for a certain generated crisis, to wit, a war. The Americans will have to tighten their belts. At first they won't understand why all of that is needed. But they'll approve everything eventually. Among other places, Biden localized the scenario in the Middle East. This caused a minor scandal which soon petered out. But it must not be forgotten that the generated crisis scenarios are there, the crisis may become a reality, and as envisaged by the scenario, President Obama should cope with it, that is, win. One is tempted to ask this question: Aren't certain people in interested states inviting a solution by force?

[Why Iran is not Iraq

- population 75 million (Iraq's is variously estimated as being anywhere between 26 and 32 million)
- a well-trained army, fully mobilized and drilled
- a retaliatory scenario available for attacks on the adversary]

RT: What is it that Iran has annoyed President Obama with?

DR: Barack Obama would prefer to take some constructive steps, to find a solution. But aside from him there are many other people that would like to make the Iraq-Afghanistan-Iran region homogenous in the political and economic sense. Besides, it is a strategically crucial region, something that explains the constant questions being posed to Iran via the IAEA. Let me stress that these sorts of frictions between the IAEA and any sovereign state are inadmissible. Should the IAEA so wish, all their grievances could be easily removed at the procedural level.

I don't rule out that the scenario might have included such a thing as a false-flag attack, or, plainly speaking, a provocation.

One of these days, the prominent US journalist Bob Woodward, author of the best-selling *All the President's Men*, is going to publish his new book of talks with President Obama and relevant materials. According to press reports, speaking in an interview with Woodward in July of this year, Obama said the United States could have withstood 9/11 and emerged stronger. Certain US observers feared that the estimate might be signaling readiness for a new attack of this kind, which should meet with a powerful rebuff directed at some terrorists with a clearly defined "Iranian address." I don't want to say that any administration may engage in those affairs. But there are people without an official status, who may wish to help the administration obtain a *casus belli*. They are offering plain-text advice to that effect.

RT: It looks like Iran itself is a target for ground and air terrorist attacks. How can it now be turned into an enemy?

DR: “False-flag attacks” as a war-starting method were time and again used in the 20th Century.

RT: As President Ahmadinejad was delivering his speech in the UN, the simultaneous translation was suddenly discontinued. He made a relevant observation but there was no reaction. Is this an ordinary situation in the UN?

[Reasons for constant escalation of tensions by the US

- a propensity to solve America’s domestic problems by launching wars in areas of the world far removed from the USA

- a strong political lobby of “chair-borne hawks”

- the wish to involve “third countries” like Russia and China in hostile activities]

DR: These things shouldn’t happen in principle. It’s yet another indication of the fact that the UN, like other international organizations, can be influenced. The same goes for the selectiveness of the IAEA grievances. Their structures are not fully independent and sovereign. Clear technical errors of this nature cannot be explained by certain circumstances.

RT: There are a great variety of expert estimates regarding Iran’s military might, ranging from very low to quite flattering. What is the reason?

DR: Iran’s putative adversary is exceedingly powerful militarily. The Iranian armaments, from the point of view of Iran itself, may look sufficiently strong to beat back an attack. But the thing is that the armaments wielded by those who will wish to oppose Iran have been tested, whereas Iranian tests have been held on much rarer occasions. But in saying that, we should keep in mind that the level of armaments is not the only decisive factor. Suffice it to look at Afghanistan, Iran’s neighbor. There is no comparison between the potential of US troops and the groups that oppose them in Afghanistan. And yet those groups constantly create very serious problems for the Americans.

RT: If a worst-case scenario is out and Iran is attacked, will the developments follow the same path as in Afghanistan and Iraq?

DR: I think that in this case the developments will follow a different path. We should keep in mind that in that case all the facilities of the attacking nations will be legitimate targets for Iran. To me, this is the burden of what Ahmadinejad said about that war not being limited to any one country or region. So it’s very difficult to foresee what a war will be all about. A high-ranking US general was right in saying that it was easy to push the button but it was a big question what would follow. A military conflict with a state possessing fairly good armaments, a population of over 70 million, and a trained army will be grave and long-term. No one can predict what its consequences will be.

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