

Michael Ledeen Demands ‘Regime Change’ in Iran

by Scott Thompson

We have already crossed the Rubicon. We are already in Hell. World War III in Eurasia is already ongoing. There was not an Iraq war; there is a continuing Iraq war. There was not an Afghanistan war; there is a continuing Afghanistan war. There’s already an onset of a war with Iran, being run covertly, as a covert operation, from the United States, in Iran right now! You see it on the television screens here. That is not a spontaneous student movement. That is a U.S.-run destabilization of Iran, trying to set up the conditions for a war. The situation in North Korea; other situations I know of; we are now *inside* World War III. It is not something that we could prevent from happening. We’re there.

—Address by Lyndon LaRouche in Istanbul, Turkey, June 14, 2003.

Ledeen’s ideas are quoted daily by such figures as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz. His views virtually define the stark departure from American foreign policy philosophy that characterized United States actions since September 11, 2001. . . . Now Ledeen is calling for “regime change” beyond Iraq. In an address titled “Time to Focus on Iran: The Mother of Modern Terrorism,” for the policy forum of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) on April 30, he declared: “The time for diplomacy is at the end; it is time for a free Iran, a free Syria and free Lebanon.”

—William O. Beeman, “Michael Ledeen: Neoconservative Guru,” in *The Daily Star*, Beirut, Lebanon, May 9, 2003

The same drumbeat for “regime change” that led to war against Iraq, is now coming from the mouths of Vice President Dick Cheney’s “chicken-hawk” cabal; only now, the target is Iran. This destabilization is being run through U.S. private foundations and think-tanks, to overthrow the government in Iran, and run a destabilization, and/or military strike against Iran’s nuclear energy production facilities.

The pointman is Michael Ledeen, who divides his time among *National Review Online*, JINSA, and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Ledeen is stirring up the networks

in Congress and the press, and lining up tainted intelligence to justify war on Iran.

This is the same Michael Ledeen, who, as a consultant to the Reagan-Bush Administration National Security Council in the mid-1980s, was a pivotal criminal figure in the Iran-Contra fiasco, covertly peddling weapons to the very Ayatollahs whom he is now plotting to overthrow. He is also the same Ledeen who now calls for the United States to wage war against Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Libya because, he alleges, they are all “masters of terror.” Yet in the 1980s, Ledeen was one of the biggest promoters in Washington of the so-called Afghansi mujahideen—including Osama bin Laden—whom he touted as “freedom fighters” and “champions of the democratic struggle against totalitarian communism.”

Ledeen’s operations are not merely the rantings of deeply disturbed wanna-be Il Duce. His efforts should be understood as reflecting the *immediate intentions* of the Administration neo-conservatives. His cronies, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith, are the key advisors to Secretary of Defense Donald “Dr. Strangelove” Rumsfeld.

Ledeen, the self-proclaimed “universal fascist,” has long been under scrutiny by *EIR* researchers, as a man who has been in the midst of some of the dirtiest covert intelligence operations of the past 30 years. *EIR*’s Special Report of April 1987, *Project Democracy: The ‘Parallel Government’ Behind the Iran-Contra Affair*, put a spotlight on Ledeen, from which I draw some of the brief profile published here.

Ledeen, as he wrote in his book *Machiavelli on Modern Leadership: Why Machiavelli’s Iron Rules Are As Timely and Important Today as Five Centuries Ago* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), is a believer in “total war” through “creative violence.” There is no such thing as peace between nations, he maintains; peace is just an interlude between wars.

Ledeen fits the profile of a “Synarchist,” or “Nazi/Communist,” as those concepts were discussed in World War II-era documents made available to *EIR* by military intelligence and other sources during the 1980s (see Jeffrey Steinberg, “Synarchism: The Fascist Roots of the Wolfowitz Cabal,” *EIR*, May 30, 2003). Particularly relevant to this characterization is Ledeen’s work with both “Red” and “Black” terrorists in Italy, and his support, along with Henry Kissinger, of the Propaganda Due (P-2) Freemasonic Lodge of former Nazi collaborator Licio Gelli, which directed the NATO-related “strategy of tension” against former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro.

Still Promoting Terrorists

On June 23, France’s Secret Service launched a crack-down on the Iranian Mujahadeen e-Khalq (MEK, or MKO), an anti-regime group that has been on the U.S. State Department’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations since 1997. Simultaneous with recent confrontations in Iran, some 150

MEK members were arrested at their “international headquarters” near Paris, and accused of plotting terrorist attacks against Iranian embassies and diplomats throughout Europe. The MEK members arrested by the French authorities were operating under the cover of the National Council for Resistance in Iran, the MEK’s international front group. Among those arrested were MEK cult leader Maryam Rajavi and her husband, MEK military chief Massoud Rajavi. Following the arrests, nine members of the group set themselves on fire in protests in Paris. One died.

Rather than applaud the French moves as part of the war against terrorism, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) is trying to whip up public support for the group. In an open letter, published in the June 24 *Washington Times*, he called for the “terrorist” designation to be dropped. He had earlier put forward an amendment to a bill that would give \$50 million to exile Iranian satellite TV stations, to continue the sort of psy-ops carried out by Radio Farda. Back on March 13, Senator Brownback had joined Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) to call for a “regime change,” in Iran, despite the fact that moderate reformers, notably President Khatami, have become a significant factor in the country. Brownback’s website states: “It may seem that our support is not really that important, but in truth, democracy dissidents inside Iran tell me that it is crucial to motivate the opposition and for them to know that there can be a strong future with the U.S. once they have re-claimed their ancient land.”

Brownback was joined in the call to arms in defense of the terrorist MEK, by Michael Ledeen’s alter-ego Daniel Pipes, who posted an op-ed on his website, demanding not only that the MEK be removed from the State Department terror list; but that the U.S. government adopt the MEK as a “liberation group” to wage guerrilla insurgency against the Iranian government.

Ledeen joined the fray with a raving article in the June 16 *National Review Online*, “The Iranian Revolution, 2003,” in which he proclaims that he can “sniff out” Iranian revolution from “the tell-tale odors coming from the undergarments of its doomed leaders.” The article cites six reasons why the Iranian “revolution” is unstoppable now—and why President Bush must embrace it. The article is considered a signal that the neo-con cabal inside the Administration is going into high gear behind the scenes to get war in Iran. Among other objectives, war on Iran would help derail the Road Map negotiations for Israeli-Palestinian peace—a policy the President supports, but the Administration neo-cons despise.

Ledeen’s ‘Focus on Iran’

Ledeen and company have been putting this operation in place for some time. In 2001, Ledeen founded the Coalition for Democracy in Iran (CDI), with a call for regime change in that country. One of his partners in founding the coalition was Dr. Rob Sobhani, a professor at Georgetown University and president of Caspian Energy Consulting. Support for the



Michael Ledeen has a long history in covert operations to destroy nations—particularly the Arab and Muslim nations of the Middle East. Now, he is leading the charge against Iran.

CDI also comes from the Center for Security Policy’s Frank Gaffney, former Rep. Jack Kemp, Joshua Muravchik of AEI, and former CIA director James Woolsey, who sits on the Defense Policy Board. Woolsey has also worked for the Doug Feith/Abram Shulsky “Office of Special Plans” in the Pentagon, which cooked the intelligence to push through the Iraq War. One of CDI’s policies, as spelled out in the June 15 *Washington Post*, is to support Brownback’s call for an Iran Liberation Act, similar to the 1997 one for Iraq.

Ledeen rails against Iranian terrorism in his recent book *The Terror Masters: Why It Happened. Where We Are Now. How We’ll Win*. According to Pacific News Service of May 19, he gave a speech at a JINSA policy forum on April 30, entitled “Time to Focus on Iran—The Mother of Modern Terrorism.”

Bernard Lewis Joins In

The next big push came on May 6, when Ledeen moderated a panel at a conference at AEI, on “The Future of Iran: Mullarchy, Democracy, and the War on Terror.”

Co-sponsoring the event was the Hudson Institute—funded by the Russian and Jewish Mafia-linked Marc Rich (whose attorneys had included Cheney’s “Scooter” Libby) and by British media baron Conrad Black—and the Founda-

What Is Universal Fascism?

Michael Ledeen's "universal fascism" signifies a world empire run by the financial oligarchy and its puppets—as distinguished from the more "crude" nationalist varieties.

EIR's April 1987 Special Report on "Project Democracy" provided an in-depth profile of the concept, which included the following excerpt from a 1975 book, *Fascism*, which is a dialogue between Ledeen and his mentor Renzo de Felice. Ledeen—who nowadays tries to claim that he is not a fascist—emerges here as an avowed enemy of the American republic.

De Felice: "Fascism was a revolutionary phenomenon . . . and we have to remember the qualitative difference between the regime, and the movement which aimed at the mobilization of the masses and the creation of a new kind

of man. Fascism had nothing in common with conservative-reactionary regimes. . . . The central element that distinguished it is the mobilization of the masses; active participation, not exclusion. Another difference was that Italian Fascism wanted to achieve the transformation of society and the individual in a direction that had never been attempted or realized in their past. . . . A new phase in the history of civilization."

For De Felice, then, the Fascist revolution was a "betrayed revolution."

"But all revolutions have been betrayed," he continued. ". . . Trotsky wrote *The Revolution Betrayed*."

Ledeen: "Just as the American Constitution betrayed the American Revolution."

De Felice: "Exactly."

For more on universal fascism, see Jeffrey Steinberg's "Synarchism: The Fascist Roots of the Wolfowitz Cabal," *EIR*, May 30, 2003.

tion for the Defense of Democracies. Opening the event was Meyrav Wurmser, director of Middle East programs at the Hudson Institute, whose husband, David Wurmser, is an adviser to Assistant Secretary of State John Bolton. Her morning panel was entitled, "Iran Today—A Reality Check," and panelists included Uri Lubrani of the Israeli Defense Ministry.

Ledeen gave the introduction for former British military intelligence operative and Princeton Professor Emeritus Bernard Lewis, who is the inventor of the idea of a "Clash of Civilizations," later popularized in a book by that name by Samuel Huntington. Lewis' thesis, cloaked in phrases of Athenian democracy, is that which President Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski formerly called "the Arc of Crisis" and today calls "the Zone of Instability." It calls for stopping Eurasian integration through manipulating tribal, ethnic, and religious axioms to destroy nation-states, beginning especially in the Middle East. Ledeen introduced Lewis as "the reigning genius of Middle East studies everywhere."

Lewis openly called for a "revolution" in Iran, to follow the military conquest of Iraq; he compared Iran to Napoleonic France or Stalin's Soviet Union. Lewis said that the most important and dangerous neighbor of Iraq was Iran, adding, "It is, I suppose, in Iran that this fear of a success of democracy in Iraq is most strongly felt, and with the very best of reasons." Pointing to the fact that there are more Shi'ites than Sunnis among Islamic religious denominations in Iraq, Lewis continued, "Shi'ism is [also] the predominant religion in Iran and the one which . . . [is] invoked by the current leadership of that country and the theocracy that was established by the revolution in '79."

Lewis presented the pie-in-the-sky view that "democratic ideas and democratic examples from a new Iraq might spread across the border . . . and the Muslim Shi'ite divines on both sides may feel—and one can understand this—they feel they have to do something about it. They have to do something to counter this American-sponsored Democratic fright. . . . What is necessary from the point of view of the Iranian theocracy is that the democratic experiment in Iraq should fail and that the consequences to Americans there should be so awful that they would go away and not come back."

Also speaking at the AEI event was Senator Brownback, who called for support for his Senate Resolution 82, and promoted his Iran Democracy amendment. "It should be the policy of the U.S.," he said, "to seek a genuine democratic government in Iran that will restore freedom to the Iranian people, abandon terrorism, and live in peace and security with the international community."

Everyone who knows the first thing about Iran realizes that any American meddling there—such as the actions already being run through Ledeen, Brownback, Woolsey, et al.—is a recipe for chaos and likely mass deaths. The promotion by Ledeen of a "liberation" of Iran is, thus, a drive for the kind of "purgative violence" that is at the heart of his "universal fascism." Which brings us to Ledeen's variety of fascism.

Ledeen's 'Synarchist' Roots

The first important influence on Ledeen's life was George Mosse, a German Jewish emigré, who had been on good terms with such Nazi leaders as Joseph Goebbels and Herman Goering. Mosse was so close that Goering offered to make his father an Aryan, and the family was permitted to leave Ger-

many 15 minutes before the law was changed.

The Cambridge-educated Mosse, who would become Ledeen's teacher at the University of Wisconsin, taught Ledeen that despite its "perversion" by anti-Semitism, Fascism ought to be scientifically studied, because the *Geist* (soul) of Western countries had been suffocated and could only be revived through Fascism or Nazism. It is reported that while Ledeen was working on his Ph.D., he was blackballed for having joined—under Mosse's influence—a cell of the Israeli intelligence-linked movement associated with Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, whom Israeli leader David Ben Gurion referred to as "Vladimir Hitler."

It was through Mosse that Ledeen was introduced to later Presidential Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board member David Abshire, who was the founder of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and who hired Ledeen as a political intelligence operative.

But an even more important mentor to Ledeen was Renzo de Felice, an advocate of the Jacobin Revolution in France which led to the emergence of the first modern Fascist, Napoleon Bonaparte. De Felice did not hide his Fascism, as he wrote in *The Illuminati and Revolutionary Mysticism, 1789-1900*: "There is something in common between my Jacobins and a certain kind of Fascism. . . . Fascism wanted to achieve the transformation of society and the individual . . . [toward] a new phase in the history of civilization."

After researching in Italy from 1966 to 1967, where he met scions of the Venetian oligarchy who are "magicians" in cultural warfare, Ledeen wrote: *Universal Fascism* (1972); "Italian Fascism and Youth," *Journal of Contemporary History*, July 1969; "Fascist Social Policy," in *The Use and Abuse of Social Science*, ed, Irving Louis Horowitz; and, among others, *Fascism, An Informal Introduction to Its Theory and Practice*, by Renzo de Felice, which includes an interview with Ledeen.

Ledeen preferred unbridled, Jacobin-style fascism, such as that of Gabrielle D'Annunzio in the early 1900s. In his 1972 *Universal Fascism*, Ledeen criticized Benito Mussolini as being too rigid: "He never had enough confidence in the Italian people to permit them a genuine participation in Fascism."

Ledeen's Criminal Trail

Ledeen has been associated, throughout the past two decades, with some of the most sordid criminal affairs, implicating government officials, intelligence services, and private "synarchist" networks:

- **Irangate:** It is particularly ironical that Ledeen is today calling for a "regime change" in Iran, since he had been an integral culprit in Project Democracy's covert operations with Iran's regime during the 1980s. He worked closely with Manuchar Ghorbanifar, an Iranian living in France, to whom he had been introduced by top Israeli political intelligence agent David Kimchee. Ledeen brought Ghor-

banifar to a meeting on Oct. 8, 1985 with the National Security Council's Lt. Col. Oliver North, at which was also present Israeli arms dealer Ya'acov Nimrodi, a key player in North's "Enterprise." Ledeen had frequent meetings with North in this regard throughout 1985, despite CIA warnings that Ghorbanifar was not to be trusted. It was through Ghorbanifar that 500 TOW missiles were shipped to Iran, and then 19 Hawk SAM missiles, in exchange for the release of American hostages then being held by terrorists in Lebanon. This was the "arms for hostages" deal that was at the heart of the Iran-Contra scandal. The weapons that went to Iran came either directly from the U.S. military stockpiles, or from Israel's massive arms industry, involving top officials of the Israeli government.

Ledeen maintained that he was just involved in a "research program" on Iran, which "by accident," turned into an "action program." However, it is notable that throughout this period, he was involved, by way of a firm called EATSCO, with former CIA Deputy Director for Plans Theodor Shackley, who was another pivotal Iran-Contra figure.

- **Italy's Propaganda-2 Lodge:** According to innumerable sources on both sides of the Atlantic, while working for Kissinger and Alexander Haig at CSIS, Ledeen became a member of the Propaganda Due (P-2) Lodge, which emerged to public light on May 20, 1981. This unmasking occurred just seven days after the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II by Mehmet Ali Agca, in which P-2 was thought to be involved. The exposure of P-2 forced the resignation of 47 Italian Army generals and 6 Navy admirals. Also named was Bruno di Fabio, a naval officer working at NATO headquarters in Brussels, across whose desk passed the reports of the secret services of all of NATO's members. Other prominent Italians revealed to be members of the secret society, who were toppled and were known to be among Ledeen's close associates, were the chief of staff of defense, Giovanni Torrisi; the head of the coordinating body of the secret services, Walter Pelosi; the head of military counterintelligence (SISMI), Giuseppe Santovito; the head of the civilian intelligence service (SISDE), Giuliano Grassini. As for P-2 Grand Master Licio Gelli himself, he was the perfect "Synarchist" or, as Ledeen might put it, "universal Fascist," having been both a Nazi SS liaison officer and, until at least 1956, a Soviet agent.

- **The Temple Mount conspiracy:** Ledeen and his wife Barbara have been part of an "Armageddon Project" to rebuild Solomon's Third Temple in Jerusalem on al-Haram al-Sharif (a.k.a. "Temple Mount") which is the third most holy site in Islam. The planned destruction of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock would unleash unstoppable warfare in the Middle East. Barbara Ledeen was until recently on the editorial masthead of *Biblical Archeology Review*, which has played a central role in plotting where the Third Temple should be placed, together with the Quatuor Cornati ("Four Crowns") research lodge of British Freemasonry.