

Iran Contras

A number of extremely reliable Arab and American intelligence sources have reported that the Bush Administration already has “boots on the ground” inside Iran, running a multi-front “Contra”-style destabilization. These operations, which are still on a relatively small scale, involve ethnic and tribal paramilitary forces, conducting ambushes, assassinations, and “blind terrorist” bombings—with the active involvement of American, British, Pakistani, and Israeli “advisors,” the sources report.

While some European governments are naively taking this “Contra” program as a de facto assurance that the Bush Administration has postponed any “big” air war campaign against Iran until after the November elections in the United States, such assurances are not all that solid, particularly as long as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld are still in office, and are steering U.S. national security policy.

For now, there are three confirmed “Contra” fronts being conducted (see the map): Attacks from the Kurdish region of northern Iraq into Iran, using Kurdish assets with an Israeli involvement; attacks from the Baluchistan region on the Pakistani border, with Pakistani military assistance; and Mujahideen e-Khalq (MEK) operations, also staged from border areas of Iraq, where the MEK have large camps.

Two recent incidents underscore the operational nature of this. In March, attacks launched from Baluchistan killed an estimated 22 local government officials; and an April Kurdish ambush killed five Iranian soldiers.

Source indicates that the Israeli “role,” beyond training and logistical assistance in Kurdish commando operations into Iran, involves planned heavy attacks on Hezbollah



positions inside southern Lebanon, coincident with a full-scale U.S. air campaign against Iran. This is to preempt asymmetric warfare retaliation by Iran against U.S. and Israeli assets. Arab sources say that Israel has a Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld green light to deal with Syria if it gets into the act by defending Hezbollah positions inside southern Lebanon. Furthermore, Arab sources have pointed to a recent naval basing agreement between the United States and Turkey, granting the U.S. Navy access to three Turkish ports—two on the Aegean Sea and one in the Mediterranean. The latter could be important if the United States became directly involved in strikes on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon, backing up Israeli ground and air assaults.

Above all else, this “Contra III” operation, now in its early phases, is a revival of the thoroughly discredited 1996 “Clean Break” scheme of Richard Perle, David

Wurmser, and Douglas Feith, to fundamentally alter power arrangements in Southwest Asia, through “regime changes” in key Arab states, Palestine, and Iran.

U.S. sources added a fourth “Contra” front to the “regime change” campaign inside Iran. During Azerbaijani President Heidar Aliyev’s meetings with President Bush and Vice President Cheney the week of May 1, he came under tremendous pressure to assist in the activation of Azeri minority destabilizations inside the northwestern region of Iran, bordering on Azerbaijan. One senior U.S. intelligence source warned that, if Aliyev allows himself to be drawn into the Bush Administration schemes, a more likely consequence will be his own overthrow, given his shrinking popularity and his country’s longstanding cooperation with Tehran (the two nations’ Presidents met recently and signed various military agreements). Dick Cheney, before becoming Vice President, was a trustee of the U.S.-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce, along with Richard Perle, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Sources have also reported on a flood of opium and heroin streaming into Iran from Afghanistan, as another feature of the U.S.-led “regime change” operation. During the 1980s, the United States used narco-terrorists as a key source of funding and logistics for both the Nicaraguan Contras and the Afghan Mujahideen.

Both American and Arab sources also warned that these on-the-ground provocations against the Tehran regime are likely to backfire, driving the Cheney-Rumsfeld bloc within the Bush Administration to quickly revive their air war schemes to attack Iran’s nuclear program sites. One experienced U.S. military source warned that such low-intensity operations are soon likely to result in the capture or killing of an American “advisor,” and that this will have serious diplomatic repercussions for a Bush Administration that is already widely discredited in the eyes of governments around the world.—*Jeffrey Steinberg*