

Stop Dick Cheney's Mad Drive for World War!

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

If the expanding political mobilization against an “October Surprise”—a military attack against Iran—succeeds in thwarting the Cheney-Bush drive, at least through the middle of October, it is likely that the war party will be forced to postpone its planned war of aggression until after the Nov. 7 mid-term elections, simply because action at a date too close to the vote, would be rightly perceived as a desperate election ploy. In the view of Lyndon LaRouche, this means that the period immediately after Americans go to the polls, would be equally fraught with danger, as Cheney et al. could hit Iran, in the context of a broader provocation against Russia and China, the ultimate targets of their permanent-war policy.

The momentum is building *against* the war planners, as an international mobilization of the LaRouche forces and new, explosive denunciations of an “October Surprise” scenario, by military, political, and intelligence circles, have been cross-feeding each other, generating a groundswell which is forcing political figures in the U.S. Congress to act.

A spate of articles appearing on Internet sites and publications of think-tanks like The Century Foundation and Global Research, have filled in the picture outlined by *EIR* over months, of what an attack against Iran would entail. Analysts as well as military professionals have stated outright that the attack has been planned and has entered the operational phase. Furthermore, detailed accounts have been provided of what the likely Iranian response would be. The net message is that summed up in a mass-distribution leaflet by Helga Zepp-LaRouche (included in this issue), now circulating in Europe: The war is for real, so do something to stop it before it is too late.

Reality, Not Scenarios

Col. Sam Gardiner, a retired U.S. Air Force officer who has been running “war games” which lay out the Cheney-Bush Administration’s military strategy, rang the alarm bell in March, at an international conference in Berlin, where he stated that the decision had already been made to go to war. Since then, Colonel Gardiner’s analyses have appeared in several locations, including *EIR*. Recently, he authored a lengthy report issued by The Century Foundation, which laid bare the fraud of the “Summer diplomacy” conducted by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (see *EIR*, Oct. 6, 2006).

In a Sept. 30 interview with INNWorldReport.net, Colonel Gardiner addressed the probable use of nuclear weapons against Iran, saying it “would be a very serious event, breaking a 61-year taboo against the use of nuclear weapons.” In his estimation, there is a 90% probability of air strikes against Iran in the next three-four months. The nuclear weapons would be used, as other military professionals have explained, to hit deeply buried targets, where conventional bunker-busters won’t work. Gardiner believes that the first phase of war will entail five nights of air strikes, after which Iran will be given an ultimatum, essentially to capitulate. The aim of the U.S. assault will then be to target the Revolutionary Guard, intelligence services, and members of the leadership, by assassination. This will be carried out with the aim of regime change.

Significantly, Gardiner’s warnings were picked up by major American and international media outlets. A UPI column by Arnaud deBorchgrave on Oct. 2, was picked up by the *Washington Times*, among others. In it, deBorchgrave recalled that Colonel Gardiner, “who called all the correct diplo-

matic and military plays preceding Operation Iraqi Freedom, now sees diplomatic failure and air strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities." DeBorchgrave quoted Gardiner's emphasis on the importance of Dick Cheney's "one-percent doctrine," i.e., "if there is even a one-percent chance of a country passing WMD to a terrorist, the U.S. must act." He also reported Gardiner's view that the policy is for regime change. UPI's international editor Claude Salhani also quoted Gardiner's warnings, saying that "the drums of war have already started beating to the cadence of military action that could be taken against Iran any time now." Salhani noted the parallels with the build-up to the Iraq war, adding, "Iran will not be a repeat performance of the Iraq scenario. A military attack on Iran will prove to be a far more difficult and costly campaign. . . ."

The fact that the war plans are operational, was also laid out convincingly in an Oct. 1 report by the Canada-based think-tank, Global Research, entitled, "The March to War: Naval Build-Up in the Persian Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean." Author Michel Chossudovsky presented the deployments to the eastern Mediterranean, by the United States and other countries—under the pretext of UN Resolution 1701 on



Col. Sam Gardiner (ret.)

Lebanon—and the deployment to the Persian Gulf, as two parts of a war plan targetting Syria and Iran. Editor Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya noted that the buildup is coordinated with aerial attacks, which have been planned since early 2004, in CONPLAN 8022, perhaps with nuclear weapons. Making the point that wars are not organized overnight, and that this war has been in the making for years, the author placed it in a long-term strategy going back to the U.S.-U.K.-manipulated Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88, as well as the breakup of the Balkans and the eastward push by NATO following 1991.

The most important items in the report, which may be based on material from Iranian sources, are details concerning the kinds of capabilities being deployed to the region, which prove that Iran is the immediate target. The *USS Enterprise*, for example, which leads the *Enterprise* Strike Group, is supposed to be in the region for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, "the warships are carrying with them equipment which is not intended for these two war theaters. Minesweepers and mine-hunters have absolutely no use in landlocked Afghanistan and are not needed in Iraq, which has a maritime corridor and ports totally controlled by the Anglo-American alliance." Such facilities are just what are needed, however, if one wants to keep the Straits of Hormuz clear. Furthermore, the *Enterprise* "carries with it a host of infiltration, aerial attack, and rapid deployment units. . . . Special mention should be made of the helicopter squadron special-

ized for combatting submarines travelling with the strike group. "Helicopter anti-Submarine Squadron 1" will be on-board the *USS Enterprise*."

The significance of this is clear: Anti-submarine capabilities would make sense only in conflict with a nation with a considerable submarine fleet; Iran is the *only one there*. The report says, in fact, that "anti-submarine drills and operations" of these units, and Canadian units, will take place "off the coast of Hawaii," before they reach their destinations. The *USS Enterprise* and the *USS Eisenhower*, which leads the Eisenhower Strike Group, will be deployed to the Gulf of Oman and to the Persian Gulf.

The Iranian Response

Most chilling and at the same time most efficient in waking up a daydreaming public to the danger of World War III, are the detailed reports by military and strategic experts, on what Iran will do if attacked. Dr. Abbas Bakhtiar, an Iranian author writing from Norway, issued an article entitled, "US vs. Iran—Is An Attack Inevitable?" in *Scoop Independent News*, Aug. 28. A second, 80-page article, is entitled "US vs. Iran: Hybrid War."

The latter article, amply documented, also identifies regime change as the aim. On Iran's response, he provides more information than has been generally available, starting with detailed information on Iran's air force, its missile strength, and so forth. To illustrate Iran's response, the author reviews many recent military maneuvers that have taken place, showing that they are all geared to a full mobilization in case of attack.

In conducting what Bakhtiar calls "hybrid war," Iran will use its regular and irregular forces, for both a conventional war and asymmetric warfare. According to his figures, Iran has a regular army of 350,000, for conventional warfare, plus 100,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), plus 100,000 Basij forces (volunteers). The army also has 350,000 reserves, and the Basij have a reserve strength of up to 300,000 (according to one report cited, 1.2 million men and women, plus 2 million inactive militia members). Finally, there are the 45,000-60,000 in the Interior Ministry serving as police and border guards.

In a land version of asymmetric war, he writes, Iran could mobilize fighting forces into Iraq, causing damage to the U.S.-U.K. forces, and disrupting their supply lines. As for the asymmetric war in the Persian Gulf, this would involve blocking the Straits of Hormuz. Bakhtiar notes that the IRGC has a separate navy with 20,000 men, with tethered mines, small fast-attack ships, and anti-ship missile systems. "To clear the shores of these missiles, the US has to invade the southern part of Iran. To clear the islands [30], it has to occupy them. To do these things, US has to first clear the entire Persian Gulf of over 1,500 small IRGC vessels, requiring a large assemblage of naval forces in the area; which

incidentally will have to pass through the Straits of Hormuz.” In the event of a blockade, the Chinese could use their own tankers for oil, risking a possible conflict with the United States. If the Iranian objectives include stopping the flow of oil, which Bakhtiar believes is the case, they could hit oil tankers and also oil wells and other facilities, using their missiles. Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait could thus be targetted, since they host U.S. bases.

The article includes detailed information on Iran’s weaponry, recalling how, after the revolution, it established its own arms production capabilities in the Defense Industry Organization and the Aerospace Industries Organization, employing 35,000 and 10,000 respectively.

Bakhtiar sums up the Iranian strategy of hybrid warfare, saying Iran has been preparing for this since 1980. The Iranians have carefully observed the U.S. experience in Afghanistan and Iraq. “Iran’s recent military maneuvers have shown that the country, if attacked, intends to unleash one of the largest irregular armies ever seen. . . . If there is going to be any fighting now, it is the IRGC that is going to be at the front in Afghanistan and Iraqi cities and towns. The conventional army will be used in defensive position to protect the mainland.” If, as he believes, Iran would respond to an air attack by sending the IRGC into both neighboring countries to fight the United States, “The only option for the US then is to try to invade Iran. But by then its 190,000 troops will be busy fighting an asymmetric war with the IRGC (+ Basij) forces and their allies in Iraq and Afghanistan.” The other option is of course nuclear weapons. Iran, he writes, could deploy chemical and biological weapons. If Iran attacked Israel, Israel would attack Syria. Syria, which has a defense pact with Iran, would be drawn in any way.

The report provides a vivid account of what LaRouche has in mind, when referring to “asymmetrical warfare” as the form of World War III.

If one were skeptical regarding the account of a layman, one should consider the estimates put out by professional military personnel. There are the growing ranks of retired military officers, like those Americans who have led the “generals’ revolt” against Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, ostensibly for his incompetent handling of Iraq, but actually to prevent his starting a new war in Iran. In addition, there are *active duty* officers who are sending clear signals of what to expect if Rumsfeld is not tied down. Gen. John Abizaid, who is active duty chief of Central Command, was quoted at length in an article, “Conundrum: Have worries about Iraq made Iran impervious to attack?” in *Aviation Week*. “I don’t want to underestimate Iran,” he said. “Its conventional forces are defensively oriented, but its intelligence forces are offensively oriented. Iran has traditionally conducted an asymmetric campaign in the region and they continue to do that.” Regarding the uselessness of a ground war, he said: “I believe our strategy for the area can’t be to control it. No nation on Earth has ever controlled the Middle East. As a matter of fact,

you’ll rapidly find out that the Middle East is going to control you.” Notwithstanding, he would agree to attack threats there. “We should attack without hesitation Al Qaeda cells wherever we find them.” As for the measures Iran would take in retaliation, Abizaid laid out the following: It could block the Straits of Hormuz, using its missile force, “that can do a lot of damage to our friends and partners in the region”; deploy a “pretty robust terrorist surrogate arm that could, in the event of hostilities, cause problems [regionally and] globally.”

Political Mobilization

The military analyses and warnings put out by General Abizaid, among many others, have been incorporated into weekly strategic overviews provided by *EIR*, which have been circulated widely in Washington, D.C. by the LaRouche Youth Movement. And the impact is being felt, as political leaders, from both sides of the aisle, are finally beginning to take note of the danger, and govern themselves accordingly. Numbers of Republicans and Democrats have begun to call for White House motion towards solving the alleged conflict with Iran, through words, not missiles, as we documented in our last issue, with the initiatives by Maryland Republican Rep. Wayne Gilchrest, and Ohio Democrat Rep. Dennis Kucinich. So far, there has been no public response from the administration.

Nor is this political activation confined to the United States. Most important has been the attentive reaction displayed by circles in Russia, through their rapid circulation of *EIR*’s continuing campaign to prevent war. On Oct. 2, an article by Jeffrey Steinberg, entitled, “Is Desperate Cheney Scheming Nuclear Sneak Attack on Iran?” went out in Russian translation, to LaRouche movement contacts in Russia and CIS countries, and was immediately, circulated and discussed. It appeared on the Ukrainian site politics.in.ua, under the headline, “Cheney Dive-Bombs Iran. With Nukes?”

On economist Mikhail Khazin’s widely read worldcrisis.ru site, a staff member posted the article in the site forum, where an all-day debate was going on, about an analysis that’s circulating on the Internet (*EIR* earlier received it from Australia), titled, “Puts forecast October surprise?” The “puts” article points to a large volume of ‘put’ options for Oct. 6, saying that the same pattern preceded the Iraq invasion. The worldcrisis.ru staff member offered Steinberg’s article as an explanation for the pattern.

Khazin added his own commentary to the posting, saying that “even if Bush and Cheney don’t hit Iran, the existence of such well-founded concerns within the American Establishment sheds an entirely different light on the Russian-Georgian crisis, and the place of those provocations in U.S. plans.” He painted a scenario, whereby Georgian President Saakashvili would lure Russia into a clash in the Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia. With demonstrations against “Russian aggression towards defenseless little Georgia” going on throughout Europe, Georgia would appeal to the UN, Foreign Minister

Sergei Lavrov would have to appear to defend Russian policy. “And under cover of this hullabaloo, the USA would ‘merely’ hit some targets in Iran with nuclear bunker busters.” Khazin concluded with a remark that it was likely due to considerations such as these, that President Vladimir Putin “looked pale” at the Oct. 1 Russian Security Council meeting.

The Broader Threat

It should come as no surprise that Russian media would respond to *EIR*’s exposés and calls for action, considering that, as LaRouche has again stressed recently, the ultimate targets of the Cheney war party are the great powers of Eurasia, China, India, and Russia. As we go to press, the crisis triggered by Georgia’s Saakashvili is escalating, and the tone of voice adopted by Russian President Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, and others, is becoming markedly harsher. As the Russian leaders have made clear, they view the provocation launched by Tblisi, with the arrest of four Russian diplomats as “spies,” as an operation emanating from those same circles inside the United States who are pushing for war against Tehran. This specific incident, in turn, is placed, correctly, within the broader context of the eastward expansion of NATO, and other threats to Russia and its role in the region, including its leading function in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

In this situation, the role played by Russia and China as permanent members of the UN Security Council, on the Iran dossier, is delicate. Secretary of State Rice has just completed a tour of the Persian Gulf and Middle East, during which she tried—apparently without much success—to constitute a “moderate Arab coalition” against Iran and other “extremist” forces in the region (read: Hamas and Hezbollah). Immediately following her regional tour, she moved on for a meeting of the “five-plus-one” group—the five permanent Security Council members, plus Germany—which has been dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue. From comments made to the press, it is clear that Rice’s intention was to force through a new resolution in New York, establishing a new ultimatum for Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment program, under the threat of sanctions. Significantly, Rice was quoted as saying *not* that Iran had to be prevented from developing an atomic bomb, but that Iran had to be prevented from acquiring the knowledge required. “The issue here is that Iran should not be in a position to acquire the technical expertise to enrich and reprocess.”

Sanctions, as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made clear again on Oct. 5, would not have a tremendous effect on the country, except to further exacerbate tensions and fuel anti-Americanism among the population. But sanctions, for Rice, for U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton, and for the British, are important as a stepping-stone towards armed conflict. Thus, the response of the Russians and the Chinese will be key, politically, in determining whether or not the war party can be stopped in its tracks.