

To Make Mideast Peace, Dump Dick Cheney Now

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Some of the major American news media has caught up with a story that *EIR* has been developing for more than a year. On Aug. 9, the McClatchey News Service reported that Vice President Dick Cheney is pressing President George Bush to give the orders to bomb Iran. While Bush has not yet done so, he has clearly picked up the Cheney line that Iran is the main source of the arms and training for the insurgents in Iraq who are killing American troops at an accelerating rate, using sophisticated roadside bombs. At a press conference on Aug. 10, the President warned: "There will be consequences for people transporting, delivering EFPs, highly sophisticated IEDs, that kill Americans right now." Referring to Iran by name, he said, "When we catch you playing a non-constructive role in Iraq, there will be a price to pay."

Bush's remarks reflect a propaganda drive for war, precisely paralleling the buildup to the March 20, 2003 invasion of Iraq. Now, as then, *New York Times* military correspondent Michael R. Gordon is playing the role of echo chamber for the Cheney forces, publishing dubious "intelligence" passed to him by Cheney's key asset on the ground in Baghdad, Gen. Kevin Bergner. Bergner was dispatched to Iraq in June as the White House point-man, after having served on the National Security Council as the military aide to Elliott Abrams, the Vice President's leading ally in the Old Executive Office Building.

On Aug. 8, Gordon filed a story, headlined "US Says Iran-Supplied Bomb Kills More Troops." Citing Lt. Gen Raymond Odierno, the number two American commander in Iraq, and General Bergner, Gordon claimed an Iranian role in the growing number of attacks and deaths of Americans in the Shi'ite areas of Iraq, although he never presented concrete evidence of a direct Iranian role in arming and training the Shi'ite insurgents.

The CIA has seriously disputed the scope of the Iranian role, insisting that the evidence is spotty and does not confirm a direct role by the Iranian regime in training and arming Iraqis. And during an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer on Aug.

6, Afghan President Hamid Karzai praised Iran's role in assisting in the stabilization of his country, a comment that provoked a sharp rebuke by President Bush when they met days later.

Gulf of Tonkin II

A well-informed Iranian source based in Washington, D. C. expressed grave concern that the Cheney forces could stage an incident, to justify an attack. There are active clandestine operations being directed by the United States and Saudi Arabia inside Iran, using Baluchi, Kurdish, and Azeri minorities along the border areas. And the Mujahideen e-Khalq (MEK), a group on the U.S. State Department's terrorist list, is being used to stage cross-border incursions into Iran from protected bases in Iraq. Recently, Saudi Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, the national security advisor to King Abdullah, and the former Ambassador to the United States, delivered \$750,000 to the MEK, an amount said to be a small percentage of the Saudi clandestine aid going to the group to conduct sabotage, kidnappings, and assassinations inside Iran.

It is such operations, combined with the massive U.S. naval and air buildup in the Persian Gulf, that has many top U.S. military officers—active duty and retired—worrying about a Cheney "Gulf of Tonkin II" incident.

Ultimately, as Lyndon LaRouche has been warning for months, if you want to avoid another disastrous war, and actually create the conditions for a lasting peace in the extended Southwest Asian region, then the only course of action, sure to succeed, is to dump Cheney now.

Even some Establishment voices are waking up to the danger. Anne-Marie Slaughter of the *Princeton Project on National Security* wrote in early August, of her worst nightmare scenario: "The Cheneyites succeed in creating a situation in which Bush does decide to bomb Iran. Iran retaliates as they openly threaten to do, with terrorist attacks against us on US soil. That tilts the [U.S. Presidential] election."