**OMNI NEWSLETTER, SPECIAL NO. ON IRAN #2**
March 15, 2007, BUILDING A CULTURE FOR PEACE
Dick Bennett, Editor (contents solicited, guest editors welcome)

**WARS COMMENCED ARE DIFFICULT TO STOP. LET US JOIN TOGETHER TO PREVENT THE ATTACK ON IRAN.**

**OMNI PROJECT**
Do you agree with me that, given Iraq, we should assume the worst from this administration—that it is planning to bomb Iran—and assume the best from the peace movement—that it will try to prevent it? So Iran should be a major focus for OMNI right now.

**TAKE ACTION TODAY**
**President Bush continues to edge toward war with Iran.** While Bush Administration officials publicly deny any plans to attack Iran, their actions demonstrate the contrary.

In order to hinder a new Bush war, the House leadership initially agreed to a provision in the draft Supplemental Appropriations bill for the Iraq war (the same bill that contains language mandating an exit from Iraq) that would require the president to seek congressional authorization before launching a military attack against Iran. But on Monday, under pressure from House members of both parties, the House leadership deleted the no war with Iran provision from the supplemental funding bill.

Please ask your Representative to tell the House leadership to include the no war with Iran provision in the Supplemental Appropriations Bill. You can call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard toll-free at 800-903-0682 and they will connect you to your Representative.

President Bush has taken several steps towards attacking Iran, including sending two aircraft carrier strike groups to the Gulf region, deploying Patriot air defense systems to Iraq, and repeatedly accusing the Iranian government of sponsoring attacks against American troops in Iraq.

The BBC reported on February 20 that the U.S. has developed a contingency plan for air strikes on Iran that includes not only nuclear sites, but also most of the country’s military infrastructure. Council for a Livable World opposes Iran’s nuclear aspirations and is horrified by some of the disgusting statements by Iran’s President Ahmadinejad. But we urge the U.S. and Iran to negotiate a solution to our disagreements rather than engaging in war.

**We can’t wait until it’s too late.** The first vote on the Iraq supplemental bill could happen as soon as this Thursday, March 15. Your call in the next 48 hours could make a difference.

Congress needs to know that the American people do not want another disastrous war in the Middle East. Please ask your Representative to tell the House leadership to include the no war with Iran provision in the supplemental spending bill. You can call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard toll-free at 800-903-0682 and they will connect you to your Representative.

"With carrier battle groups crowding the Gulf, and with the Bush administration beating the battle drum to a degree not heard since the buildup to the Iraq war, one can only conclude that either this is a demonstration of coercive diplomacy par excellence, or that the United States is going to attack Iran."

SEE IRANIANS AS FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS
http://www.lucasgray.com/video/peacetrain.html
our enemies?????? God help us all.

**FRIENDS EXEC GOES TO IRAN**

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Tell Congress to support direct talks with Iran
Tell your U.S. Senators and

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View this email as a web page.
Representative that the U.S government should stop the hostile rhetoric toward Iran and instead open up direct talks with the Iranian government. The war in Iraq cannot be allowed to spill over into Iran.

Email your Congresspeople >

Now online: a video interview with Mary Ellen McNish about the faith leaders’ delegation to Iran that took place last week. Mary Ellen talks about her trip, the need for U.S.-Iranian direct talks, and more.

Watch it now >

Dear James,

Mary Ellen McNish, AFSC’s general secretary, just returned from a week-long delegation of U.S. religious leaders to meet with Iran’s president and other civic and religious leaders. The delegation, led by the AFSC and the Mennonite Central Committee, was the first U.S. religious group to meet with an Iranian president in Iran since the revolution in 1979. This delegation is an example of the person-to-person diplomacy that AFSC has engaged in throughout its 90-year history.

Web video interview

Yesterday (Monday), Mary Ellen sat down for a short interview about her experiences in Iran with Aura Kanegis, AFSC’s director of public affairs. In the interview, she talks about the need for diplomacy, her discussion with the Iranian president, women in Iran, how news is covered in Iran and the U.S., and more. We videotaped it and posted the video on our web site to share with you. Thank you to those who sent in questions. Your input helped to guide Aura’s interview. I hope you find the video interesting. You can view Mary Ellen’s interview at www.afsc.org/iran.

Tell Congress: Support direct talks with Iran

Also, please support the call by AFSC and U.S. religious leaders for immediate face-to-face talks between the U.S. and Iranian governments.

Email your U.S. Senators and Representative to ask that they support a joint House-Senate resolution calling on the U.S. to talk directly with Iran, and help to avert war with Iran by cosponsoring and seeking immediate action on S.Con.Res.13 in the Senate and H.Con.Res. 33 in the House. These identical measures, introduced by Senator Bernard Sanders (VT) and Representative DeFazio (OR) respectively, seek to prevent expansion of war into Iran.

We believe that dialogue between countries is not a reward; it’s a starting point and a necessity. Dialogue should not be conditional. Join with us in urging the U.S. government to directly and constructively talk with the Iranian government.

Take Action >

More about the delegation to Iran

The 13-person religious delegation traveled to Iran to encourage a dialogue in the hope of averting war. The group met with Muslim and Christian leaders, government officials, and other Iranian people. The final day included a meeting with former President Khatami and current President Ahmadinejad. The meeting with President Ahmadinejad lasted two-and-a-half hours and covered a range of topics, including the role of religion in transforming conflict, Iraq, nuclear proliferation, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The delegation returns to the United States with a proposal that both the U.S. and Iranian governments immediately engage in direct, face-to-face talks; cease using language that defines the other using “enemy” images; and promote more people-to-people exchanges, including religious leaders, members of Parliament/Congress, and civil society.

Leaders from the following organizations took part in the delegation: American Friends Service Committee, Episcopal Church USA, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Mennonite Central Committee, National Council of Churches, Pax Christi USA, Sojourners, and the United Methodist Church.

For the full text of “U.S. Religious Leaders Find Hope in Iran,” the religious leaders’ joint statement for direct talks and more, see AFSC’s web news room.

Peace, Peter Lems

For the AFSC’s Wage Peace Campaign

SOME OF THE DUPLICITOUS HISTORY OF US/IRAN RELATIONS

This really is not news, but more people ought to be aware of it. -- MT  Most people probably don't realize that Halliburton, our Vice President's company, has been trading for years with most of the folks on the United States' "axis of evil" list, including Iran, Saddam's Iraq, and Libya. One of the simple ways around this is to simply export the illegal stuff to the United Arab Emirates, where trading activity accounts for the biggest single chunk (16.5%) of a $20 billion economy, to be re-exported to the offending countries.

And most people probably don't realize that it was White House darling Henry Kissinger who led the way for Iran to become a nuclear country.
In the mid-1970s, led by Kissinger who saw in Iran a "platform state" to fight communism in the region, Washington proposed that The Shah expand his nuclear capacity by acquiring as many as twenty three nuclear reactors. The big question here: Who is really the enemy of the U.S.? And to whom is Bush and Cheney and their conspirators more loyal? The United States, or their UAE friends? Because, like The Sopranos, they seem to have no loyalty whatsoever except to their own gang. With Halliburton/USA threatening to go to war against one of its best customers, Iran, one has to wonder what kind of real arm-twisting is going on behind the scenes.

Sue Skidmore and Mark Haim have put a lot of helpful info, together here for you.

Hello friends,

I'm sure most of you have had dreams where something bad is about to happen, a car is going to run you down or someone is coming to hurt you but, even though you can see it coming, you are paralyzed, unable to move, not able to get away or to protect yourself. Those can be frightening episodes, but the good news is that you wake up from them, and they are just nightmares.

Well, in looking at the actions of the U.S. government vis-à-vis Iran, I get some of those same feelings. Something very bad is coming down the pike and collectively we are paralyzed. People like Sy Hersh have been shouting loud and clear for more than a year now, but far too few of us are making moves to stop the insanity that the Bushies appear poised to unleash. If I can mix metaphors, for a moment, we will need to wake up a lot of people and find our collective voices or the nightmare vision we are seeing will become the nightmare reality that virtually the whole planet will be forced to deal with.

If the urgency of our current situation hasn't yet hit home, I invite you to take just two minutes to read through the headlines from this morning's Democracy Now! I've copied the first six items below and I went digging around on the web and dug up the links to the original articles on almost all the stories (something that they unfortunately don't post on the DN! website). I hope you will at least read through these short blurs, and then, perhaps, you'll explore at least some of the links. I've also pasted in the lead to the first segment of the DN! show after the headlines, which is a very interesting interview regarding the Iranian initiative that the U.S. rejected nearly four years ago, shortly after the Iraq invasion.

I realize that there's a ton of material here, if you follow all the links, and we are all busy, and most of you won't have the time to read all of this. This said, this information is critical and we ignore it at our collective peril. Please read what you can, share it with others, and most importantly, take action.

This is the essential piece. We've got to make sure our voices are heard, both by our fellow citizens and by our elected officials. This is clearly no time to hope that this will blow over, or to feel too busy to get involved. We need each and every one of you turning out for demonstrations, writing letters, calling Congresspeople, talking about this with others, recruiting folks for the major peace demos coming up around the four year anniversary of the Iraq invasion (locally in mid-Missouri we're talking Sunday, March 18th. Please see www.mideastpeaceworks.org for info and to sign up to attend).

I welcome your responses. I hope you will take the time to consider what you might do, and take what steps you can to avoid a situation much worse than the current Iraq debacle coming our way.

Many thanks,
Mark Haim

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Report: Pentagon Establishes Planning Group for Iran War

The New Yorker magazine is reporting the Pentagon has established a special planning group within the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to plan a bombing attack on Iran. According to investigative journalist Seymour Hersh the new planning group has been charged with a developing a bombing plan that could be implemented within 24 hours of getting the go-ahead from President Bush. Hersh also reveals that U.S. military and special-operations teams have already crossed the border into Iran in pursuit of Iranian operatives.

http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/070305fa_fact_hersh

U.S. & Saudis Covertly Pump Money To Sunni Groups

Hersh reports this comes as the Bush administration and Saudi Arabia are pumping money for covert operations in many areas of the Middle East – including Lebanon, Syria and Iran – in an effort to strengthen Saudi-supported Sunni Islam groups and weaken Iranian-backed Shiites. Some of the covert money has been given to jihadist groups in Lebanon with ties to al Qaeda.


Negroponte’s Resignation Linked to Concern Over New Middle East Policy

Meanwhile there are growing signs that high-level officials within the U.S. government are concerned over the administration's Middle East policy. Seymour Hersh reports that John Negroponte resigned his post as National Intelligence Director for a job at the State Department in part because of his discomfort that the administration's covert actions in the Middle East so closely echoed the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s.

http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/070305fa_fact_hersh

Meanwhile the London Times reports that up to five senior US generals and admirals are signaling that they will resign if President Bush attacks Iran.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/iraq/article1434540.ece

Cheney on Iran: "All Options Are Still on the Table"

On Saturday, Vice President Dick Cheney warned that all options remain on the table for Iran.

Dick Cheney: "We've worked with the European community and through the United Nations to put in place a set of policies to persuade the Iranians to give up their aspirations and to resolve the matter peacefully, that's still our preference. But I've also made the point, the President has made the point that all options are still on the table."

Vice President Cheney's comments came during a trip to Australia. Today Cheney is in Pakistan meeting with Pakistani President General Musharraf. Cheney's meeting with Musharraf comes just a week after the New York Times revealed that Al Qaeda has resumed running training camps inside Pakistan.


Israel Seeks OK to Use Iraqi Airspace For Possible Iran Attack

The Daily Telegraph is reporting Israel is seeking permission to fly fighter jets through Iraqi air space in case the Israeli government decides to attack Iran. Three Arab countries -- Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates -- have reportedly told the United States that they would not object to Israel using their airspace.
Quality of U.S. Intelligence on Iran's Weapons Criticized

In other news on Iran, the Los Angeles Times reports most of the U.S. intelligence shared with the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency on Iran has proved inaccurate. None of the tips about supposed secret weapons sites have provided clear evidence that Iran was developing illicit weapons. One senior diplomat at the IAEA said "Since 2002, pretty much all the intelligence that's come to my desk has proved to be wrong."


Ex-Congressional Aide: Karl Rove Personally Received (And Ignored) Iranian Peace Offer in 2003

While the Bush administration continues to insist it has no plans to go to war with Iran, the New Yorker magazine is reporting the Pentagon has created a special panel to plan a bombing attack on Iran that could be implemented within 24 hours of getting the go-ahead from President Bush. According to investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, the planning group was established within the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in recent months.

In response to the report, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman denied the US was planning to go to war with Iran and said "To suggest anything to the contrary is simply wrong, misleading and mischievous." Whitman went on to say the White House is continuing to address concerns in the region through diplomatic efforts.

This comes against the backdrop of last week's allegation that Bush's chief advisor Karl Rove personally received a copy of a secret offer from the Iranian government to hold negotiations four years ago. The Bush administration decided to ignore the grand bargain offer. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently claimed she had never even seen the document. At the time Iran said it would consider far-reaching compromises on its nuclear program, relations with Hezbollah and Hamas and support for a Palestinian peace agreement with Israel.

Rove's involvement was revealed by an aide to former Republican congressman Bob Ney. The aide, Trita Parsi, said Ney was chosen by the Swiss Ambassador in Tehran to carry the Iranian proposal to the White House because he knew the Ohio Congressman to be the only Parsi-speaking member of Congress and particularly interested in Iran.

Full Article in text, audio or video formats at: http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?id=07/02/26/157241

US ACCUSES IRAN OF SENDING VARIOUS WEAPONS TO IRAQ

EXPLOSIVELY FORMED PENETRATORS (EFPs) FROM IRAN?

See: "Exploding the Myth of Iranian Bombs" by Andrew Cockburn (LATimes), TMW 2-19-07, 8A: Anybody can make these destructive bombs for $20 or $30 each, as we saw in Lebanon recently.

IRAN ACCUSES US OF SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO IRAQI TERRORISTS?

See: http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?id=07/02/26/157241

Renunciation of reality

H.D.S. Greenway
The Boston Globe
Tuesday, February 20, 2007

BOSTON: With carrier battle groups crowding the Gulf, and with the Bush administration beating the battle drum to a degree not heard since the buildup to the Iraq war, one can only conclude that either this is a demonstration of coercive diplomacy par excellence, or that the United States is going to attack Iran.

President George W. Bush and the Pentagon continue to deny "for the umpteenth time" that an attack is being planned. They say that diplomacy is in play. But that is what they said about Iraq long after the decision to go to war had already been made.

The case for coercive diplomacy is that efforts to curtail Iran's nuclear ambitions, and Iran's meddling in Iraq, will have no effect unless the nailed club is in the diplomatic bag. Iran has become too cocky, the reasoning goes, taking advantage of American weakness in Iraq. Let the Europeans propose the carrots. The role of the United States is to enable diplomacy with the stick.

Optimists argue that Bush will not bomb Iran's nuclear facilities because they are so spread out that an air strike would only temporarily delay an Iranian bomb, and that America does not have the troops to contemplate a ground invasion.

Still others point out that although Iran's theocracy is becoming increasingly unpopular — especially among the young — military strike would instantly harden public opinion against the United States and delay the day when mullah influence begins to dissipate.

Realists who know the Middle East argue that an attack on Iran would have untold consequences that would damage the United States even more than the occupation of Iraq has done.

I heard one of America's foremost experts on Iran, Gary Sick of Columbia University, say on National Public Radio that he didn't think war was on the way because he didn't believe that the White House had completely "renounced reality." And there you have the nub of the question.

Pessimists argue that the hallmark of the Bush presidency is the renunciation of reality.
Bush turned his back on the "realists" that made up his father's national security team. He ignored the Iraq Study Group's recommendations for de-escalation and containing America's failure in Iraq, as well as its recommendations for talks with Iran and Syria. Vice President Dick Cheney is still in denial about Iraq and is still talking about progress being made while the raveling of Iraq unfolds before him.

In Cheney's world the executive branch has all power over foreign and military matters, and he is already on record as saying that election of a Democratic majority in Congress will have no bearing on administration policy. Bush continues to raise the fear stakes, going on about the demonic plans of Islamic extremists to take over the Muslim world and restore a caliphate — ignoring that Al Qaeda's radical Sunni goals would not include the apostate Shiite. The president has said that Iran will not be allowed even the knowledge to create a nuclear bomb. Pessimists will also remember that when the Iranians offered the administration an olive branch, saying they would curtail their activities with Hezbollah and Hamas and cooperate in Iraq, the White House was unprepared even to discuss it.

Colonel Powell's boast that he favored restraint over war with Iran, which had been very helpful to the United States in Afghanistan, but that "there was reluctance on the part of the president to do that." Powell thought Bush wasn't prepared to talk to a regime he didn't think should be in power. The administration's position has been: We don't talk to evil, and to do so would be a betrayal of the Iran's huddled masses longing to be free. Perhaps the Bush administration still thinks regime change is the answer, that a military strike would topple the rotten Tehran regime like the proverbial house of cards. Pessimists can just hear Cheney arguing that he and Bush have only two years left to do the Lord's work before they are followed by weaklings and cowards, whether they be Republican or Democrat.

As the U.S. Congress debates and considers what to do about Iran, the shadow of a far greater foreign policy mistake hovers over Iran. Optimists hope that Bush will stick to Winston Churchill's maxim that jaw, jaw is better than war, war. But pessimists fear that the administration's heart is more with Otto von Bismarck who said that "the great questions of our time are not decided by speeches and majority decisions ... but by iron and blood."

BOOKS ON IRAN
"Know Thine Enemy...New Books by Persian Writers Offer the West a Chance to Re-Imagine Iran" by Bill Berkeley. *Columbia Journalism Rev.* (Sept./Oct. 2006). The 7 books challenge the US government’s and media’s caricatures of Iran ("axis of evil," "the world’s foremost state sponsor of terrorism"). Highlighted in all these books is the "larger tradition of activism and yearning for democracy and the rule of law" that makes the authors "deeply apprehensive about American threats against Iran," since the "threat of military force gives the system a pretext to crack down on its legitimate opposition."

**PREVENTING A NEW WAR AGAINST IRAN**
By David Krieger

The United States is deeply mired in a preventive war of its own making in Iraq with no clear way out. Now the Bush administration is making accusations against Iran and bolstering US forces in the Persian Gulf with two additional naval battle groups.

Why would the Bush administration contemplate a new war against Iran? How would a war against Iran in any conceivable way benefit the United States? There are no clear answers that explain the Bush administration’s increased threats toward Iran. Yet, despite the president’s statements that he will pursue “robust diplomacy,” the possibility that the United States will launch an attack against Iran cannot be dismissed.

The Bush administration has continued trumpeting the fear that Iran may develop nuclear weapons, a technological possibility because of the uranium enrichment program it is pursuing. This charge, however, is not credible, at least in the near-term. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei reports there is no evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. The CIA indicates that it would take Iran a decade to develop nuclear weapons, if that were its intention. Thus, the charge that Iran is on the brink of becoming a nuclear weapons state appears farfetched. The charge, and the lack of evidence to support it, is ominously similar to the spurious claims the Bush administration leveled against Iraq as a cause for initiating that war.

More recently, the Bush administration has floated a new charge that Iran has provided Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to insurgents in Iraq, even suggesting that the devices were responsible for the deaths of some 170 Americans. The administration has put forward little supporting information to substantiate its claim, and the government of Iran denies the allegation. It may be possible that Iranians are giving some support to Iraqi Shiites, but is this adequate cause to attack Iran and initiate a war with a country of some 70 million people? This is highly doubtful, unless the US is prepared to pay an even heavier price in blood and treasure than it is already paying in Iraq.

Perhaps Mr. Bush thinks that he can bring democracy to another country in the Middle East, but this hasn't worked out in Iraq and it is even less likely to happen in Iran. This is particularly true since US military forces are already stretched so thin that there would be little possibility for the US to put "boots on the ground" in Iran. A war against Iran would likely be an air war, a prolonged demonstration of "shock and awe."

What else could be motivating the Bush administration to pursue a war against Iran? Is it that the administration wishes to support Israel, which views Iran as a significant threat? Is it that Iran, like Iraq before it, is talking about changing its currency for oil revenues to Euros? Could it be that Mr. Bush likes being a "war president," and, rather than accept defeat in Iraq, is seeking to widen the war by extending it to Iran?

It is possible that the administration’s threatening behavior toward Iran is merely muscle flexing to strengthen the US hand in negotiations, but this possibility cannot be relied upon, particularly in light of the manner in which the Bush administration initiated the Iraq War.

There have been reports by respected journalist Seymour Hersh that the US has contingency plans for the use of nuclear weapons against Iran. Even rumors of the US planning to use nuclear weapons preemptively against Iran should raise serious concerns in the halls of Congress and throughout the country. Nuclear weapons concentrate power in the hands of a single individual, undermining democracy and the future of global security.

Congress opened the door for Mr. Bush's attack against Iraq. Whatever the administration’s motives may be for its threatening behavior toward Iran, Congress should now be responsible for closing the door to a US attack on another country. Speaker of the House Pelosi has said, "Congress should assert itself...and make it very clear that there is no previous authority for the president, any president, to go into Iran."

Congress should act proactively and go on record before it is too late, foreclosing the president from attacking Iran without specific Congressional authorization, as well as appropriate authorization by the United Nations Security Council. The hour is late, but not too late, for Congress to assert its Constitutional responsibility.

Senator Robert Byrd, among other Senators and members of Congress, has already put forward a resolution that requires Congressional approval of any offensive US military action taken against another country. In introducing
Today, U.S. Strategic Command in Bellevue, Nebraska (a suburb of Omaha) is the most dangerous place on the face of the earth. To thwart this wrong-headed and potentially catastrophic assault on Iran by StratCom will require nothing less than a mobilization by the world community. The Bush/Cheney Administration must be publicly challenged in the court of world opinion, and international media coverage of StratCom’s leading role is integral to rallying opposition.

Can you imagine the public reaction—particularly in the Muslim world—if the war plans taking shape at StratCom were actually real? The possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons to penetrate the reinforced bunkers protecting the Iranian nuclear research facilities is also apparently real.

As bad as things are in Iraq—and there is no doubt that they are bad—for Mr. Bush to initiate a new war by attacking Iran would only make matters worse for the United States. The US needs to pursue an exit strategy from Iraq, not a preemptive war against yet another country that has not attacked the United States. The Congress of the United States needs to go on record now to assure that Mr. Bush understands this and the limits of his authority under the Constitution.

Senator Resolution 39 on January 24, 2007, Senator Byrd stated, "I am introducing a resolution that clearly states that it is Congress—not the President—that is vested with the ultimate decision on whether to take this country to war against another country. He called his resolution "a rejection of the bankrupt, dangerous and unconstitutional doctrine of preemption, which proposes that the President—any President—may strike another country before that country threatens us..."

As bad as things are in Iraq—and there is no doubt that they are bad—for Mr. Bush to initiate a new war by attacking Iran would only make matters worse for the United States. The US needs to pursue an exit strategy from Iraq, not a preemptive war against yet another country that has not attacked the United States. The Congress of the United States needs to go on record now to assure that Mr. Bush understands this and the limits of his authority under the Constitution.

David Krieger is president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (www.wagingpeace.org).

**INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY, MY COMMENT, AND MIKE LIEBER'S COMMENT**

**Mike:**
This is definitely scary! It seems to me that the mood, especially and most importantly in Congress, would be against any such attack on Iran unless the evidence is far more compelling that the Iranian government is behind much of the turmoil in Iraq (which I doubt since most of the "civil war" seems to be Sunni-led). I don't think the Congress will buy even a "slam dunk" statement from the CIA or NSA at this time.

The outgoing Iranian ambassador to the UN (they don't have one to the US since we don't have relations with them) pointed out that the weapons shown on TV and said to be of Iranian origin had dates of manufacture on them in the month-day-year format, whereas almost the entire world outside the US uses the day-month-year format. He said that indicates the evidence is fabricated.

**Dick Bennett <jbennet@uark.edu> wrote:**

**Friends:**
That the US has plans and is preparing to attack Iran is certain, that it will actually do it, is not. But can we merely hope and risk? Preventing killing is surely one of the noblest actions. So I appeal to you to forward this to your friends, colleagues, congregations to respond in ways they feel might contribute to stopping the invasion. And please advise OMNI how it should respond—Gladys, Melanie, and the other members of our board.

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**International Media Advisory on U.S. Strategic Command and the Impending Attack on Iran**

Reports of a possible U.S. air assault against Iranian nuclear facilities have been circulating in the media for more than a year and a half now. Former CIA agent Philip Giraldi (The American Conservative, 8/1/05), Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh (New Yorker Magazine, 4/17/06) and most recently, investigative reporter Elaine义 Papen in the March 2007 Vanity Fair, have all warned of the White House’s plans for an air- and sea-based strike against Iran.

But such an assault has been in the planning since before November 2003, when U.S. Strategic Command near Omaha, Nebraska completed its preparations for waging offensive and preemptive strikes against Iran and North Korea (William Arkin, Washington Post, 5/15/05). Under “CONPLAN 8022” (Contingency Plan 8022), the Omaha-based command center is now commissioned to strike anywhere in the world within minutes of detecting a target deemed a threat to the United States’ national security. And the projected attack against Iran—which could well include nuclear as well as conventional weapons—will be planned, launched and coordinated by StratCom.

For over half a century, the seemingly remote Omaha Air Force Base in the American heartland served exclusively as the command center for the U.S.’s nuclear deterrent. After 9/11, however, StratCom underwent a significant transformation of its role and mission, becoming in effect the “war room” for waging the White House’s “War on Terror.” StratCom retained its historic responsibility for overseeing the largest nuclear weapons arsenal in the world. But it acquired the additional charges of “full-spectrum global strike” (staging offensive, preemptive attacks); combating weapons of mass destruction; space and computer warfare; ballistic missile defense; and surveillance and reconnaissance (the “warrantless wiretaps” conducted by the National Security Agency, for instance, were a StratCom project).

According to the Vanity Fair article, StratCom could be ready to launch a “massive” aerial attack against the hundreds of nuclear facilities in Iran as soon as the end of this month (February). The possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons to penetrate the reinforced bunkers protecting the Iranian nuclear research facilities is also apparently real.

Today, U.S. Strategic Command in Bellevue, Nebraska is the most dangerous place on the face of the earth. To thwart this wrong-headed and potentially catastrophic assault on Iran by StratCom will require nothing less than a mobilization by the world community. The Bush/Cheney Administration must be publicly challenged in the court of world opinion, and international media coverage of StratCom’s leading role is integral to rallying opposition.

Can you imagine the public reaction—particularly in the Muslim world—if the war plans taking shape at StratCom were common knowledge? Here we have the command center for the world’s largest nuclear arsenal orchestrating an unprovoked attack (possibly even with nuclear weapons) on a non-nuclear Muslim nation, in order to prevent that country from even developing nuclear power for civilian purposes, for fear it might someday make a bomb. StratCom’s policy promotes a morally repugnant double standard. And it is begging to be turned into a ‘bully pulpit,’ from which opponents can expose its hypocritical behavior.

**From:** Global Network [mailto:globalnet@mindspring.com]

**Sent:** Friday, February 16, 2007 8:14 AM

**To:** Global Network Against Weapons

**Subject:** U.S. Strategic Command & the Impending Attack on Iran
Under international law, were the United States again to launch an unprovoked attack against a Muslim nation— as it did with Iraq—it would be acting illegally. But if the U.S. were also to use tactical nuclear weapons on Iran, it would be only the second time in over 61 years that a nuclear weapon has been used militarily. And on each of those occasions, it will have been the United States that used them. The role and mission of StratCom has changed so dramatically in the past five years that most of the world has little idea of what is currently going on there. At this critical moment in history, the international media could provide no greater service to the world community than to publicize the acts being plotted at StratCom. We urge you to give this ‘news tip’ your full consideration. We may not have much time before something irrevocable in human affairs occurs.

I would personally be willing to assist you any way I can in getting this story out to an international audience. I can be reached directly at 402-475-7616 and at my personal email address of WalteRinne@neb.rr.com.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Tim Rinne
State Coordinator, Nebraskans for Peace
Nebraskans for Peace is the oldest statewide Peace & Justice organization in the United States, and has been working for more than 35 years to alert the public about U.S. Strategic Command. Check out our website at: www.nebraskansforpeace.org

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http://space4peace.blogspot.com (our blog)

* if you were determined to start a war with Iran, how would you do it?

First, youd set up a special intelligence unit to cook up rationales for war. A good model would be the Pentagons now-infamous Office of Special Plans, led by Abram Shulsky, that helped sell the Iraq war with false claims about links to Al Qaeda.

Sure enough, last year Donald Rumsfeld set up a new Iranian directorate inside the Pentagons policy shop. And last September Warren Strobel and John Walcott of McClatchy Newspapers—who were among the few journalists to warn that the administration was hyping evidence on Iraqi W.M.D. reported that current and former officials said the Pentagons Iranian directorate has been headed by Abram Shulsky.

Next, youd go for a repeat of the highly successful strategy by which scare stories about the Iraqi threat were disseminated to the public.

http://welcome-to-pottersville.blogspot.com/

Dear Bonnie Barton,

Yesterday, I posted a diary on DailyKos detailing my thoughts on the situation concerning Iran. You can read the entire post below, and I invite you to visit the diary at DailyKos so that you can also read the dialogue I had with members of the site’s community discussing this critical issue.

Is War with Iran Inevitable?
As the President fights for public support of his troop surge in Iraq, he is also ratcheting up the pressure on Iran. A second aircraft carrier battle group (with Newsweek reporting a third group likely to follow), Patriot missiles to protect our allies, arresting Iranian personnel in Iraq, releasing additional information about Iranian involvement, appointing a Navy Admiral to command forces in the region,
even seeking diplomatic support from Sunni Arab friends in the region -- Yes, the Iranians are interfering inside Iraq and seeking nuclear capabilities. Yet the President's recent actions give the US little additional leverage to engage and dissuade Iran, and, more than likely, simply accelerate a dangerous slide into war. The United States can do better than this.

Since 9/11 the Iranians have tried on several occasions to open a dialogue with the United States. They, of course, had their own interests at heart, not ours. Yet, from dialogue some common interests might have emerged. The Bush Administration would have none of it, and branded Iran a member of the Axis of Evil.

During that period, with most of the world on our side, we had enormous diplomatic, economic and military leverage over Iran. Now, deeply committed militarily in Iraq, more isolated diplomatically, increasingly indebted to some of Iran's crude oil customers, only modestly successful in gaining UN sanctions against Iran, the Administration has refused to change our approach, and has instead chosen to augment the least effective element of US power in the region - air and naval.

We are already totally dominant in air and naval power over Iran. Even with Iran's new Russian anti-aircraft equipment, no one should doubt that US forces could penetrate these defenses and strike with precision with minimal losses. Iran's naval countermeasures in the Gulf can be largely preempted. The Iranians no doubt recognize this.

But the Iranians perceive American weaknesses on the ground, with an American Army too small to invade and occupy Iran, and too engaged inside Iraq even to threaten it. They see our soldiers through sniper sights, and from behind the triggers of improvised explosive devices, while they see themselves as a nation that gained considerable strength from a war with Iraq that cost a million casualties, took eight years, and involved withstanding missile strikes on cities and the use of chemical weapons. They no doubt believe that, whatever the current alignments of Sunni states, a US strike against Iran would bring outpourings of sympathy, public support, and waves of impassioned volunteers from throughout the Islamic world. They would see themselves as the heroic martyrs uniting Islam. The Iranians may believe this reaction would enforce on the United States a rapid, humiliating withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, leaving them military savaged but strategically victorious.

In this they might very likely be proven wrong. US power is far more sustainable in the region than Iran would like to believe, and the military humiliation Iran would suffer at the outset could well deter any outside assistance. The US does have a military option. But this is a struggle that will be costly for all involved, will further isolate the region, and whose ultimate outcome is likely to be decided by future incumbencies. Leaders on both sides should recognize that war is the most unpredictable of human endeavors, and that unanticipated consequences almost always follow.

I believe some in the Administration have seen this confrontation as inevitable - or have sought it - since late 2001. At that time a Pentagon general held up to me a Defense memorandum which he described as a five year road map to the conflict. But surely we have learned by now that, particularly in this region, force and the threats of force should be the last, last, last resort.

Military power aside, the US has enormous economic leverage over the Iranians through our influence on world financial institutions, international commerce and capital flows. While the latest actions against Iran's banking system show the sharp stick of US power, the potential carrots are enormous, too. Islamic pride cannot be purchased, but neither can a proud nation ignore a more hopeful vision of its future.

The American troop surge is not likely to impact Iran's on-the-ground influence in Iraq. Their presence serves the interests of some in Iraq; and they are deeply embedded and widely active. Only their perception of new interests and opportunities is likely to do this. They would need to see their situation through a different lens. It is asking a lot. But, cannot the world's most powerful nation deign speak to the resentful and scheming regional power that is Iran? Can we not speak
of the interests of others, work to establish a sustained dialogue, and seek to benefit the people of Iran and the region? Could not such a dialogue, properly conducted, begin a process that could, over time, help realign hardened attitudes and polarizing views within the region? And isn’t it easier to undertake such a dialogue now, before more die, and more martyrs are created to feed extremist passions? And, finally, if every effort should fail, before we take military action, don’t we at least want the moral, legal and political "high ground" of knowing we did everything possible to avert it?

Whatever the pace of Iran's nuclear efforts, in the give and take of the Administrations rhetoric and accusations and Iran's under-the-table actions in Iraq, we are approaching the last moments to head off looming conflict. Surely, it is past time to ask our elected officials in the White House and Congress to exercise leadership: recognize the real strategic challenge we face, and start to work now to avoid an escalation and widening of conflict in the Mideast.

Thank you for reading my thoughts on Iran. Again, I invite you to read the important discussion that followed in the comments section of my DailyKos diary. This is a critical issue for our nation, and it is essential we continue to speak out.

Sincerely,

Wes Clark

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From: Chris Delacruz [mailto:chrisdelacruz2000@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 10, 2007 7:29 AM
To: Dick Bennett
Subject: Target Iran - US able to strike in the spring

Dear Dick,

Here's the 2 attachments for the article titled Target Iran - US able to strike in the spring. Each is 2 pages. The Guardian post links to its articles about Iran at http://www.guardian.co.uk/iran/0,,889981,00.html

Taken from http://www.guardian.co.uk/iran/story/0,,2010086,00.html

US preparations for an air strike against Iran are at an advanced stage, in spite of repeated public denials by the Bush administration, according to informed sources in Washington.
The present military build-up in the Gulf would allow the US to mount an attack by the spring. But the sources said that if there was an attack, it was more likely next year, just before Mr Bush leaves office.

Neo-conservatives, particularly at the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute, are urging Mr Bush to open a new front against Iran. So too is the vice-president, Dick Cheney. The state department and the Pentagon are opposed, as are Democratic congressmen and the overwhelming majority of Republicans. The sources said Mr Bush had not yet made a decision. The Bush administration insists the military build-up is not offensive but aimed at containing Iran and forcing it to make diplomatic concessions. The aim is to persuade Tehran to curb its suspect nuclear weapons programme and abandon ambitions for regional expansion.

Robert Gates, the new US defence secretary, said yesterday: "I don't know how many times the president, secretary [of state Condoleezza] Rice and I have had to repeat that we have no intention of attacking Iran."

But Vincent Cannistraro, a Washington-based intelligence analyst, shared the sources' assessment that Pentagon planning was well under way. "Planning is going on, in spite of public disavowals by Gates. Targets have been selected. For a bombing campaign against nuclear sites, it is quite advanced. The military assets to carry this out are being put in place."

He added: "We are planning for war. It is incredibly dangerous."

Deployment

Mr Cannistraro, who worked for the CIA and the National Security Council, stressed that no decision had been made.

Last month Mr Bush ordered a second battle group led by the aircraft carrier USS John Stennis to the Gulf in support of the USS Eisenhower. The USS Stennis is due to arrive within the next 10 days. Extra US Patriot missiles have been sent to the region, as well as more minesweepers, in anticipation of Iranian retaliatory action.

In another sign that preparations are under way, Mr Bush has ordered oil reserves to be stockpiled.

The danger is that the build-up could spark an accidental war. Iranian officials said on Thursday that they had tested missiles capable of hitting warships in the Gulf.

Colonel Sam Gardiner, a former air force officer who has carried out war games with Iran as the target, supported the view that planning for an air strike was under way: "Gates said there is no planning for war. We know this is not true. He possibly meant there is no plan for an immediate strike. It was sloppy wording.

"All the moves being made over the last few weeks are consistent with what you would do if you were going to do an air strike. We have to throw away the notion the US could not do it because it is too tied up in Iraq. It is an air operation."

One of the main driving forces behind war, apart from the vice-president's office, is the AEI, headquarters of the neo-conservatives. A member of the AEI coined the slogan "axis of evil" that originally lumped Iran in with Iraq and North Korea. Its influence on the White House appeared to be in
decline last year amid endless bad news from Iraq, for which it had been a cheerleader. But in the face of opposition from Congress, the Pentagon and state department, Mr Bush opted last month for an AEI plan to send more troops to Iraq. Will he support calls from within the AEI for a strike on Iran?

Josh Muravchik, a Middle East specialist at the AEI, is among its most vocal supporters of such a strike.

"I do not think anyone in the US is talking about invasion. We have been chastened by the experience of Iraq, even a hawk like myself." But an air strike was another matter. The danger of Iran having a nuclear weapon "is not just that it might use it out of the blue but as a shield to do all sorts of mischief. I do not believe there will be any way to stop this happening other than physical force."

Mr Bush is part of the American generation that refuses to forgive Iran for the 1979-81 hostage crisis. He leaves office in January 2009 and has said repeatedly that he does not want a legacy in which Iran has achieved superpower status in the region and come close to acquiring a nuclear weapon capability. The logic of this is that if diplomatic efforts fail to persuade Iran to stop uranium enrichment then the only alternative left is to turn to the military.

Mr Muravchik is intent on holding Mr Bush to his word: "The Bush administration have said they would not allow Iran nuclear weapons. That is either bullshit or they mean it as a clear code: we will do it if we have to. I would rather believe it is not hot air."

Other neo-cons elsewhere in Washington are opposed to an air strike but advocate a different form of military action, supporting Iranian armed groups, in particular the Mujahideen-e Khalq (MEK), even though the state department has branded it a terrorist organisation.

Raymond Tanter, founder of the Iran Policy Committee, which includes former officials from the White House, state department and intelligence services, is a leading advocate of support for the MEK. If it comes to an air strike, he favours bunker-busting bombs. "I believe the only way to get at the deeply buried sites at Natanz and Arak is probably to use bunker-buster bombs, some of which are nuclear tipped. I do not believe the US would do that but it has sold them to Israel."

Opposition support

Another neo-conservative, Meyrav Wurmser, director of the centre for Middle East policy at the Hudson Institute, also favours supporting Iranian opposition groups. She is disappointed with the response of the Bush administration so far to Iran and said that if the aim of US policy after 9/11 was to make the Middle East safer for the US, it was not working because the administration had stopped at Iraq. "There is not enough political will for a strike. There seems to be various notions of what the policy should be."

In spite of the president's veto on negotiation with Tehran, the state department has been involved since 2003 in back-channel approaches and meetings involving Iranian officials and members of the Bush administration or individuals close to it. But when last year the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, sent a letter as an overture, the state department dismissed it within hours of its arrival.
Support for negotiations comes from centrist and liberal thinktanks. Afshin Molavi, a fellow of the New America Foundation, said: "To argue diplomacy has not worked is false because it has not been tried. Post-90s and through to today, when Iran has been ready to dance, the US refused, and when the US has been ready to dance, Iran has refused. We are at a stage where Iran is ready to walk across the dance floor and the US is looking away."

He is worried about "a miscalculation that leads to an accidental war".

The catalyst could be Iraq. The Pentagon said yesterday that it had evidence - serial numbers of projectiles as well as explosives - of Iraqi militants' weapons that had come from Iran. In a further sign of the increased tension, Iran's main nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, cancelled a visit to Munich for what would have been the first formal meeting with his western counterparts since last year.

If it does come to war, Mr Muravchik said Iran would retaliate, but that on balance it would be worth it to stop a country that he said had "Death to America" as its official slogan.

"We have to gird our loins and prepare to absorb the counter-shock," he said.

War of words

"If Iran escalates its military action in Iraq to the detriment of our troops and/or innocent Iraqi people, we will respond firmly"
George Bush, in an interview with National Public Radio

"The Iranians clearly believe that we are tied down in Iraq, that they have the initiative, that they are in position to press us in many ways. They are doing nothing to be constructive in Iraq at this point"
Robert Gates

"I think it's been pretty well-known that Iran is fishing in troubled waters"
Dick Cheney

"It is absolutely parallel. They're using the same dance steps - demonise the bad guys, the pretext of diplomacy, keep out of negotiations, use proxies. It is Iraq redux"
Philip Giraldi, a former CIA counter-terrorism specialist, in Vanity Fair, on echoes of the run-up to the war in Iraq

"US policymakers and analysts know that the Iranian nation would not let an invasion go without a response. Enemies of the Islamic system fabricated various rumours about death and health to demoralise the Iranian nation, but they did not know that they are not dealing with only one person in Iran. They are facing a nation"
Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

"Iran’s Not the Big Bad Nuclear Wolf," by Thomas P.M. Barnett (Scripps Howard News), TNN (1-14-07). In three parts: 1. skeptically appraises Iran’s nuclear threatening, 2. downplays “windbag” Ahmadinejad’s power, and 3. anticipates the rise of “Iran’s Gorbachev-like figures and urges US leaders to support them.

“Did the U.S. just provoke Iran?"

Thursday’s raid on the Iranian consulate is more evidence that President Bush is ready to escalate the conflict."

By Juan Cole

Jan. 12, 2007 | For months, rumors of war between the United States and Iran have been building. Many fear that President Bush is spoiling for a fight, and they’ve begun to interpret various developments in the region as the run-up to an attack on Tehran. A report in the British press about a possible Israeli raid on Iran's nuclear facilities
President Bush's speech on Wednesday night only stoked such speculation. Bush paid lip service to the Iraq Study Group report, but cast aside its advice that he negotiate with Iran and Syria. Instead, he rattled sabers at Iran with some ferocity, accusing it of arming insurgents in Iraq and threatening it with international isolation. He attempted to rally his Sunni Arab allies, such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, in this effort. He said, "We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. We'll interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria. And we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq." He announced that he would position another aircraft-carrier battle group in the Persian Gulf and would deploy Patriot antiaircraft batteries.

Then Thursday came a U.S. raid on an Iranian consulate in the Iraqi Kurdish city of Irbil. By the end of the day, rumors of war with Iran had spread to normally cautious corners of the Internet. The Washington Note wondered aloud if Bush had issued an executive order to commence military action against Iran and Syria. Was the raid a deliberate provocation and the preface to war?

An eyewitness report briefly posted in Arabic to the Web site of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan reported that two U.S. helicopters hovered near the building for a quarter of an hour early Thursday morning, then dropped off several soldiers. They approached the consulate and used megaphones to demand that those within surrender. They then tossed stun grenades inside before attacking it and detaining five persons within, three of whom were Iranians. The U.S. soldiers confiscated computers and records from the building. According to the Associated Press, U.S. troops also hurried to the Irbil airport in hopes of detaining persons suspected of trying to flee the country.

The Iranian mission's application to the Kurdish Regional Government to be recognized as a consulate is still in process, but it would be sophistry to argue, as the U.S. has done, that its status as a diplomatic mission is questionable. American forces did, indeed, raid an Iranian government installation. Thursday's events, however, are unlikely to be the immediate preface to wider action against Iran, since the operation appears to have been carefully targeted and limited in scope. It was also not the first action taken against Iranian targets inside Iraq. Last month, U.S. forces raided the compound of influential Shiite cleric Abdul Aziz al-Hakim and netted Iranian intelligence officers.

But if Bush were to escalate the regional conflict and try to involve Iran, the assault on the Iranian consulate in Irbil suggests the ways in which he would justify his actions. He and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have begun speaking, without presenting any evidence, of Iranian aid to groups killing U.S. troops in Iraq -- hence the reference to "networks" in his Wednesday speech. The difficulties faced by the U.S. military occupation of Iraq itself may well be made the pretext for aggressive action against Iran.

In escalating a confrontation with Iran, Bush is placating his friends in Sunni-dominated states. On Thursday, the Saudi-backed London daily Al-Hayat ("Life") reported that Bush called Saudi King Abdullah to discuss security issues with him, and described the measures to be taken in Baghdad. Saudi officials have on several occasions expressed alarm about increasing Iranian influence over Iraq. Sunni Arab allies of the U.S. such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt have taken the lead in asking that Bush not withdraw precipitately from Iraq and not acquiesce in growing Iranian influence and power in the region. In return, the Bush administration is pressuring the kingdom to help rein in rebellious Iraqi Sunni Arabs.

Speaking in Provo, Utah, on Thursday, Saudi ambassador to Washington Prince Turki al-Faisal seemed to endorse Bush's plan, saying, Saudi Arabia "has always maintained that since America came into Iraq uninvited, it should not leave uninvited. . . . For America to pack up now and leave would be very detrimental and something that would be unacceptable to our part of the world."

The anti-Iranian passages of Bush's speech seem to have pleased Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as well. Al-Shaqr Al-Awsat ("the Middle East"), a pan-Arab London daily, reported that Mubarak warned on Thursday against a deep cleavage in the region, which he said would harm the Middle East and the whole world. He accused the Iranians of seeking support in the region. He called on "all to keep their hands off Iraq," urging that the dangers of a sectarian or ethnic war be recognized. He predicted that the situation in Iraq would deteriorate after the "barbaric" way in which former dictator Saddam Hussein was executed. Iran had welcomed the execution of its old enemy.

Reviews from elsewhere were less kind. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini condemned Bush's new security plan, charging that more U.S. troops would only bring greater instability and tension to the Iraqi capital. He called instead for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq as the only realistic means for solving U.S. problems in that country. He dismissed Bush's charges of Iranian and Syrian intervention in Iraqi domestic affairs as merely an attempt to find a scapegoat for its failed policies. He described Bush's decision to bring Patriot antiaircraft missiles to Iraq as a ploy to protect Israel ("the Zionist regime") under the guise of safeguarding Iraq, a Muslim country. With regard to the Iranians detained in Irbil, he demanded their immediate release. He pointed out that Iraqi officials had denied Iranian interference in their domestic affairs.

And the Iranians were not the only ones alarmed by the belligerent tone of Bush's address and the immediate follow-up with a violation of international norms in assaulting a consulate. Senators of both parties also lambasted Bush's apparent resort to a tactic similar to that of Richard Nixon in Cambodia, when he widened a failing war. At a hearing on the Hill where Secretary of State Rice was grilled, Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., warned that Bush would need a new and separate congressional authorization to launch an attack on Iran. Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., called Bush's plan "the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam." Hagel specifically cautioned against a Cambodia-style diversion in Iran.

Within Iraq, even local critics of Iran objected to Bush's plan to put more U.S. troops in Baghdad. The Association of Muslim Scholars, a hard-line Sunni Arab clerical organization, replied that "every U.S. soldier on Iraqi soil is one too many," and beseeched the U.S. Congress to take a stand against the president's plan so as "to prevent the continuing spillage of the blood of innocents," according to German wire service DPA.

The consulate raid, meanwhile, seems to have alienated some of America's best friends. Members of the Kurdistan Regional Government maintain that the Americans did not contact them about this operation beforehand, and Kurdish leaders protested the raid. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, who is of Kurdish heritage, said on another Bush gambit with unforeseen, disastrous consequences. The fallout from a big firefight between U.S. soldiers and the Kurdistan paramilitary could have been serious, since Kurds are among the few strongly pro-American populations left in Iraq. -- By Juan Cole