OMNI NEWSLETTER, 4TH SPECIAL NO. ON IRAN

Ed. Dick Bennett

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ATTACK THREATENED

INTERNET INFO SOURCES (from Chris D)
Besides listening to Democracy Now at Democracynow.org you can following what’s going on between the US and Iran at http://www.buzzflash.com/search/?Query=iran
You can try the BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/default.stm
or do a search at http://news.google.com/advanced_news_search?hl=en&ned=us&q=
Also, from The Daily Kos: http://www.dailykos.com/tag/Iran%20war (from Larry W)

MARJORIE COHN ON BUSH ATTACK PLANS
http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/09/02/3565/
“Bush Plans War on Iran” By Marjorie Cohn  September 2, 2007
The Sunday Times of London is reporting that the Pentagon has plans for three days of massive air strikes against 1,200 targets in Iran. Last week, Alexis Debat, director of terrorism and national security at the Nixon Center, told a meeting of The National Interest, a conservative foreign policy journal, that the military did not intend to carry out "pinprick strikes" against Iranian nuclear facilities. He said, "They're about taking out the entire Iranian military."

Bush has already set the wheels in motion. With Rovian timing, Alberto Gonzales' resignation was sandwiched between two Bush screeds - one aimed at ensuring Congress scares up $50 billion more for the occupation of Iraq, the other designed to scare us into supporting war on Iran. As Gonzales rides off into the sunset, the significant questions are who will take his place and how that choice will facilitate Bush's occupation of Iraq and attack on Iran.

One name that's been floated for Bush's third attorney general is Joe Lieberman, the "independent" senator from Connecticut. Lieberman, who advocates the use of military force against Iran, was the only person Bush quoted in his August 28 speech to the American Legion. Bush called Iran "the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism" and pledged to "confront Tehran's murderous activities."

Gonzales greased the Bush/Cheney wheels for torturing in violation of the Geneva Conventions, illegally spying on Americans, and purging disloyal Bushies.

Similarly, Lieberman would ensure the Justice Department mounts a vigorous defense of a war of aggression against Iran. And Bush would get a two-fer: Connecticut's Republican governor would appoint a Republican to fill Lieberman's seat, returning control of the Senate to the GOP. A Republican-controlled Senate would direct the
agenda, thereby furthering the Bush/Cheney plan.

Lieberman is closely affiliated with American Israeli Public Affairs Committee. "AIPAC leverages its power by an alliance with the Christian Right, which has adopted a bizarre ideology of 'Christian Zionism,'" according to University of Michigan professor Juan Cole. "It holds that the sooner the Palestinians are ethnically cleansed, the sooner Christ will come back. Without millions of these Christian Zionist allies," Cole added, "AIPAC would be much less influential and effective."

During the 2004 election, a 100% "AIPAC voting record" was Lieberman's litmus test for an acceptable presidential candidate. As the House of Representatives was on the verge of passing a resolution that would've required Bush to consult Congress before attacking Iran, the AIPAC lobby stopped it in its tracks.

Bush's WMD-hyping against Iran is déja vu in the run-up to Operation Iraqi Disaster, where he played loose and fast with the truth about Iraq's alleged WMDs. His statement that a nuclear Iran could put the region "under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust" conjures up his images of a "mushroom cloud" in the hype-up to Iraq.

How inconvenient for Bush that the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) just found Iran's uranium enrichment program is operating well below capacity and is nowhere near producing significant amounts of nuclear fuel. The IAEA report says Iran "has been providing the agency with access to declared nuclear materials, and has provided the required nuclear material accountability reports in connection with declared nuclear material and facilities."

Iran and IAEA agreed on a plan with a step-by-step timetable of cooperation to settle unresolved issues. The agreement said there were "no other remaining issues and ambiguities regarding Iran's past nuclear program and activities," and characterized the accord as "a significant step forward."

"This is the first time Iran is ready to discuss all the outstanding issues which triggered the crisis in confidence," said IAEA director general Mohamed ElBaradei. "I'm clear at this stage you need to give Iran a chance to prove its stated goodwill. Sanctions alone, I know for sure, are not going to lead to a durable solution"

In 2003, when Dr. ElBaradei reported there was no evidence that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear program, the White House was not pleased. And as Saddam Hussein became more cooperative with the weapons inspector, Bush became "infuriated," according to Bob Woodward.

Bush's vow, "We will confront this danger before it is too late," is the Iran incarnation of his illegal preemptive war doctrine, which he inaugurated in Iraq. In a clear signal he is seeking regime change in Iran, Bush called for "an Iran whose government is accountable to its people, instead of leaders who promote terror and pursue the technology that could be used to develop nuclear weapons."

Barnett Rubin reported on Global Affairs blog that one of the leading neo-conservative institutions has "instructions" from Dick Cheney's office to "roll out a campaign for war with Iran in the week after Labor Day; it will be coordinated with the American Enterprise Institute, the Wall Street Journal, the Weekly Standard, Commentary, Fox, and the usual suspects. It will be heavy sustained assault on the airwaves, designed to knock public sentiment into a position from which a war can be maintained. Evidently they don't think they'll ever get majority support for this - they want something like 35-40 percent support, which in their book is 'plenty.'"

Bush/Cheney created the White House Iraq Group (WHIG) to lead a propaganda campaign to bolster public support for war with Iraq. The White House decided to wait until after Labor Day of 2002 to kick off WHIG's mission. Chief of staff Andrew Card explained, "From a marketing point of view, you don't introduce new products in August." Five years later, they're marketing a new and even more dangerous product
war with Iran. British military historian Corelli Barnett says "an attack on Iran would effectively launch World War III."

Our military spending has reached $1 billion every 2-1/2 days and we are borrowing $2-1/2 billion per day. Bush is mortgaging our children's future security and wealth. We have lost more than 3,700 soldiers in Iraq and tens of thousands of Iraqis have died.

We have already seen how easily Congress caves in to AIPAC. It's up to the people. As Noam Chomsky said, "The most effective barrier to a White House decision to launch a war [on Iran] is the kind of organized popular opposition that frightened the political-military leadership enough in 1968 that they were reluctant to send more troops to Vietnam."

Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and president of the National Lawyers Guild. She is the author of Cowboy Republic: Six Ways the Bush Gang Has Defied the Law. Her articles are archived at http://www.marjoriecohn.com/

McGovern: STOP THE WAR
http://www.opednews.com/articles/opedne_ray_mcgo_070831_do_we_have_the_coura.htm

“Do We Have The Courage To Stop War With Iran?
Ray McGovern, Aug. 31, 2007  During his 27-years as a CIA analyst, Ray McGovern chaired NIEs: he is now on the Steering Group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS).
"We are on the edge of a precipice. And the Democrats are doing less than nothing to prevent our being pushed over the edge by Bush-Cheney.” From Ed Herman

STEADY DRUMBEAT FOR WAR in LOCAL NEWSPAPERS (compiled by Dick B, only a small selection)
TMN (7-25-07) Steven Hurst (AP) “American Envoy Scolds Iran.” US Ambassador to Iraq criticized an Iranian minister for Tehran’s “arming and training of Shiite militias.” [All the militias? Some? Which militias? No evidence whatever was cited by our Amb.]
8-6-07 ADG, “Iran’s Hand Spotted in Iraq.” “Rogue Shiite militiamen with Iranian weapons and training made almost three-quarters of the attacks that killed or wounded American forces last month …a top U.S. commander said Sunday.” (Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno). [Again no evidence was cited. Three-quarters? How was that measured? These military agents of the Bush Admin. must think we are credulous sheep.] TMN (8-6-07) Kim Gamel (AP) “U.S.: Iran Backs Most Attacks.” “Rogue Shiite militiamen with Iranian weapons and training launched three-quarters of the attacks that killed or wounded American forces last month in Baghdad…a top U.S. commander said.” ADG (8-9-07) Sally Buzbee (AP) “32 with Iran Links Killed, U.S. Says.” “U.S. aircraft and soldiers attacked Shiite militia bomb makers accused of links to Iran…” TMN (8-13-07) Marcia Dunn (AP) “Senior Sunni Politician Issues Appeal to Arab Nations.” Sunni leader asks Arab nations to stop “genocide campaign” by Shiite militias armed, trained, and controlled by Iran.” “Adnan al-Dulaimi said ‘Persians’ and ‘Safawis,’Sunni terms for Iranian Shiites, were on the brink of total control in Baghdad and soon would threaten Sunni Arab regimes which predominate in the Mideast.” [This is major fear-mongering, and utterly contrary to Bush and military claims of security progress in Baghdad.] 8-14-07 Bush Admin. declares the Iranian Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization. [Like our Army’s Special Forces? That is, the Bush Admin. has declared the Iranian armed forces and therefore its boss government to be a terrorist organization. It is so unprecedented and brazen in world history as to seem fanatically deranged. And without forethought for the same accusation—and with overwhelming evidence—that our armed forces are invading, bombing, terrorizing terrorist organizations, which is what the majority of people around the world think.] TMN 8-16-07 “U.S. Tightens Iran Clampdown” (AP).
The Bush admin. blacklisting Iran’s Revolutionary Guard as a “terrorist” org. is “a new salvo” not only against Iran but against countries doing business in Iran. The US will cut Tehran off from the US financial system, freeze assets, and punish companies that transact with Tehran. The US intends to isolate Tehran with sanctions on companies.
ADG 8-16-07 “U.S. Taking a Tougher Approach Toward Iran.” List RG as “foreign terrorist” org. is “adopting a
more confrontational approach with Tehran.”
These dubious claims by US officials of huge Iranian Shiite interventions in Iraq are reported without critical inquiry by any of the AP reporters, though they do say “alleged” and “he said.” They need to ask questions right! Now read the next item.

NOT IRANIAN SHIITES IN IRAQ BUT SAUDI SUNNIS!
Sunni extremists from Saudi Arabia make up half the foreign fighters in Iraq, many suicide bombers, a U.S. official says. By Ned Parker, Times Staff Writer July 15, 2007.

BAGHDAD “Although Bush administration officials have frequently lashed out at Syria and Iran, accusing it of helping insurgents and militias here, the largest number of foreign fighters and suicide bombers in Iraq come from a third neighbor, Saudi Arabia, according to a senior U.S. military officer and Iraqi lawmakers.
About 45% of all foreign militants targeting U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians and security forces are from Saudi Arabia; 15% are from Syria and Lebanon; and 10% are from North Africa, according to official U.S. military figures made available to The Times by the senior officer. Nearly half of the 135 foreigners in U.S. detention facilities in Iraq are Saudis, he said.

MISC. ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF IRAN ALSO IN LOCAL PAPERS
ADG (3-11-07), “13 Nations at Baghdad Talks.” US won’t talk with Iran, but Iraq will.
TMN (8-13-07), Hanley and David (AP) “Italy Probe Unearths Illegal Arms.” The arms trail: From Iraqi Interior Ministry order for arms to a company in the UAE, to an Italian co. in Malta for rifles and machine guns, to Bulgarian supplier of Russian weapons, to Russia, to Jordan.
TMN (8-14-07) Joe McDonald (AP) “China’s Chery Eyes Facility in Iran.” China’s biggest domestic automaker “is opening a factory in Iran,” in partnership with Iran’s “biggest automaker, Khodro Co., as well as new “ventures with Chrysler and Fiat.”
ADG (8-15-07), Amir Shah (AP), in an article mainly about the Taliban’s S. Korean hostages, reports on Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s friendly visit to Afghanistan, where he denied US allegations of Iran sending weapons to Afghan. and Iraq.
TMN (8-31-07), George Jahn (AP), “U.N. Agency Applauds Iranian Cooperation.” The International Atomic Energy Agency reported “significant’ cooperation from Iran…and noted that Tehran had slowed uranium enrichment.”

FOX NEWS WARMONGERING EXPANDS TO IRAN
Videos from Robert Greenwald showing how FOX News Channel is pushing for another war... with Iran!  http://foxattacks.com/

WARMONGER CONG. BOOZMAN
The House voted 397-27 to authorize $645.5 billion in war spending for fiscal 2008. All Ark. Rep. voted for it. Lawmakers rejected an amendment to the bill that would have prohibited war funding for planning the invasion of Iran. Ark.’s Berry, Ross, and Snyder voted for the amendment. BOOZMAN VOTED AGAINST IT. Planning will go forward. (ADG 5-20, "Washington Digest").

WARMONGER LIEBERMAN
Reid says U.S. strike on Iran would be destabilizing
Mon Jun 11, 2007 6:44PM EDT
Taken from  
http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN1120228220070411?feedType=rss&rpc=22
WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Sen. Joseph Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut and chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, said over the weekend the United States should be prepared to use military force to stop Iran from training and equipping Iraqi militants blamed for the deaths of U.S. troops in Iraq. Iran has denied supplying Iraqis with armor-piercing munitions and U.S. officials say they cannot prove complicity on the part of the Tehran government.
But Lieberman, appearing on CBS' Sunday program "Face the Nation," said the United States had "good evidence" that Iraqis were being trained to use the weapons at a camp inside Iran. He advocated a military strike in retaliation, saying much of the job could be done with air strikes.
"The invasion of (Iran) is only going to destabilize that part of the world more," Reid said on Monday after speaking at a forum hosted by the Center for American Progress think tank. Analysts described Lieberman's comments as an escalation of official U.S. rhetoric. Up to now, officials including President George W. Bush have vowed to confront any Iranian networks found inside Iraq. "This takes it across the border," said Ray Takeyh, an Iran expert at the Council on Foreign Relations. "But it would not be a surgical limited strike. It could potentially escalate into a much more serious confrontation between the two countries, and if that's the direction Lieberman wants to go, he has to be very honest about the potential pitfalls."
(from Chris D).

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

**Senate Passes Lieberman's ANTI-Iran Amendment**
**GOP/DEM JOIN AGAIN FOR ANOTHER WAR**

This afternoon, the Senate voted 97 to 0 to pass Senator Lieberman’s amendment on Iran (Amendment 2073) to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (H.R. 1585). Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Carl Levin (D-MI) called for unanimous consent on the amendment and became a co-sponsor himself, after Mr. Lieberman agreed to modifications that supposedly will include language to ensure that the amendment will not have appearances to authorize military force against Iran.


A little publicised amendment to the defense spending bill denouncing Iran for the "murder" of US soldiers in Iraq was proposed by Independent Democrat Joseph Lieberman and passed unanimously in the US Senate on Wednesday. Republicans and Democrats all lined up to support the White House's unsubstantiated accusations that Tehran is funding, training and arming Iraqi militias, "who are contributing to the destabilisation of Iraq and are responsible for the murder of members of the United States Armed Forces".

For all their antiwar posturing, **not a single Democrat**, including the leading presidential contenders Hilary Clinton, Barrack Obama and Joseph Biden, opposed the amendment. Having supported the Bush administration's crimes in Iraq, the Democrats are lending credibility to another campaign of lies, half-truths and disinformation aimed at justifying a new military
The vote demonstrates once again that the differences between the White House and the Democrats are purely tactical. What unites all factions of the American political establishment is their defence of the strategic and economic interests of US imperialism in the Middle East. None of them has any principled opposition to a US military attack on Iran, if it would further American domination in this key region.

In his speech, Lieberman pointed to the underlying US strategic interests involved. "One of them was to prevent Iran from dominating parts of Iraq. Another was to preserve our credibility in the region... that is important to us in so many ways. In the most direct way... we continue to depend too much on oil and gas that comes from the Middle East so we have an interest in keeping it stable," he declared.

While it mandates no action beyond regular reports to Congress, the Lieberman amendment effectively endorses the Bush administration's propaganda against Iran. For months, the White House and the Pentagon have maintained a steady drumbeat: the Iranian Revolutionary Guards are training, financing and supplying arms, including deadly armour-piercing devices, to militias that are killing US troops.

No concrete evidence has been provided beyond the occasional display of Iranian manufactured arms and statements purportedly made by militia members locked away in US detention. Iranian officials have repeatedly dismissed the allegations. Nevertheless the accusations have steadily escalated. On July 2, US military spokesman Brigadier General Kevin Bergner for the first time accused the highest levels of the Iranian
government of direct involvement in attacks on US forces, specifically the killing of five American troops in Karbala in January.

The outrage and righteous indignation of Lieberman and others over alleged Iranian "meddling" in Iraq is staggering for its hypocrisy and arrogance. The Bush administration has 160,000 troops inside Iraq waging a criminal neo-colonial war for the domination of the country's resources. It has endorsed covert operations inside Iran aimed at destabilising the regime and has repeatedly declared that in dealing with Tehran all options are on the table, including the military one.

Lieberman speaks for a considerable layer of the American political establishment that advocates the unrestrained use of US military might to pursue its strategic and economic ambitions. Far from being held back by the Iraqi quagmire, the advocates of "regime change" in Tehran propose to extend the war into a broad regional conflict against Iran and its "proxies" throughout the Middle East.

At stake is the control of the region's oil and gas. Any back down or compromise over Iran would leave America's Asian and European economic rivals holding all of the stakes in that country's resources. Likewise any US retreat from Iraq would leave the field open for other powers to fill the vacuum. The alternative is a macabre and reckless gamble that a war against Iran would establish US domination over the region as a whole.

What was significant about Wednesday's vote was the willingness of the entire US Senate to endorse the pretext for a new war. It is a clear signal that the Democrats would rapidly fall into line with any military
adventure in Iran, despite the overwhelming antiwar sentiment among the American population as a whole.

Critique of the preceding article:

From: Jeff Blankfort [mailto:jblankfort@earthlink.net]
Sent: Saturday, July 14, 2007 4:11 PM
Subject: ZOG Report: Senate Passes Lieberman's Iran Amendment

What more can one say? The foreign policy of the US as well as the government itself is following the dictates of the Zionist lobby. For years, those on the extreme right used to talk about ZOG which was, of course, considered to be "anti-semitic." Those folks, coming to the problem for the wrong reasons, didn't really have any idea of how correct they were. Today what is considered to be "anti-semitism" by the Jewish establishment is more often than not the observable truth. This article follows the tradition of the US and worldwide left in steering clear of the truth and offers no analysis as to why the Democrats are so willing to follow the pro-Israel agenda. He describes Lieberman as "an unapologetic supporter of the Iraq occupation," but not what really drives Lieberman who is an unapologetic supporter of Israel. In fact, there is no mention of Israel in the article.-JB

FUNDAMENTALIST WARMONGERING

Apocalypse Now: Christian Fundamentalism

Fundamentalist preachers and doctrines have been part of the American landscape for a long time. Starting May 15, David Barsamian's Alternative Radio Project is syndicating a speech by PRA Senior Analyst Chip Berlet where he discusses Christian apocalyptic thinking, historically and today. In recent years, starting with Billy Graham, apocalyptic thinkers have moved prominently into the political arena, contributing to debate on domestic and foreign policy. Take Pastor John Hagee, a Texas-based evangelical who broadcasts on radio and TV, who has said, "The United States must join Israel in a preemptive military strike against Iran to fulfill God's plans for both Israel and the West's biblically prophesized end-time confrontation with Iran, which will lead to Rapture, Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ."

Listen at http://www.alternativeradio.org

ILLEGAL IMPERIAL US ATTACK ON IRAN 2007: BOTH SUBVERSION AND THE ARMED THREATENING OF A GOVERNMENT VIOLATES THE UN CHARTER

Bush Authorizes New Covert Action Against Iran
http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/052307J.shtml

The CIA has received secret presidential approval to mount a covert "black" operation to destabilize the Iranian government. Bush has signed a "non-lethal presidential finding" that puts into motion a CIA plan that reportedly includes a coordinated campaign of propaganda, disinformation and manipulation of Iran's currency and international financial transactions, current and former officials in the intelligence community say.

Nine US Warships Enter Gulf in Show of Force
http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/052307K.shtml

Nine US warships carrying 17,000 personnel entered the Persian Gulf on Wednesday [May 23, 2007] in a show of force off Iran's coast that Navy officials said was the
largest daytime assembly of ships since the 2003 Iraq war began.

William D. Hartung and Frida Berrigan write, "The administration is building the case for war against Iran - a job made easier by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent announcement that Iran can now enrich uranium on an industrial scale - despite the fact that many Iran-watchers and nuclear experts consider their claims of enrichment capacity to be an overblown boast."

BUSH PREPARING TO BOMB IRAN?
GENERAL PACE VS. BUSH
The Web is buzzing tonight with new tough talk on Iran and a possible attack by the United States and/or Israel. The latest bombshell, so to speak, comes from the Jerusalem Post and is highlighted on the Drudge Report:
A high-ranking American military officer told the Post that senior officers in the US armed forces had thrown their support behind Bush and believed that additional steps needed to be taken to stop Iran.
Predictions within the US military are that Bush will do what is needed to stop Teheran before he leaves office in 2009, including possibly launching a military strike against its nuclear facilities.
This is all starting to look very much like the worst case scenario when it was announced on Friday that Gen. Peter Pace would not be reappointed for another term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
The official explanation for why Pace would not be asked to serve another term were patently ridiculous.
It's getting harder to believe that Pace's dismissal was about anything else other than the Cheney administration's agenda for war with Iran. It's been increasingly acknowledged that the Joint Chiefs, with Pace at the helm, had been a leader in steering Bush away from half-baked Iran attack schemes.
In April 2006, Seymour Hersh reported in the New Yorker:
[A] Pentagon adviser on the war on terror...confirmed that some senior officers and officials were considering resigning over the [Iran] issue. "There are very strong sentiments within the military against brandishing nuclear weapons against other countries," the adviser told me. "This goes to high levels." The matter may soon reach a decisive point, he said, because the Joint Chiefs had agreed to give President Bush a formal recommendation stating that they are strongly opposed to considering the nuclear option for Iran.
This March, Pace embarassed the Bush White House by knocking down an administration claim about Iranian weapons shipments into Iraq:
Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, said today he has no evidence the Iranian government has been sending military equipment and personnel into neighboring Iraq.
(forwarded by Chris D 6-11)

PROTESTING THE INVASION

Contents:
Books
Quakers
Chomsky

(Footnote on British sailors incident.)

NEW BOOKS
--Scott Ritter's new book: Target Iran: The Truth About the White House's Plans for Regime Change.
--Barsamian, David. Targeting Iran. City Lights, 2007. Four experts discuss the 1953 CIA coup and the rise of the Islamic regime, relations with Iraq and Afghanistan, the consequences of U.S. policies, etc.
------ In THE IRAN AGENDA: The Real Story of U.S. Policy and the Middle East Crisis (PoliPointPress, $14.95, October 2007), author and journalist Reese Erlich shows how the U.S. government is planning to subvert the Iranian government and lie about it to the American people. He traces the troubled history between the two countries that has led to the current showdown over nuclear technology and he reports from Iran and northern
Support AFSC’s work for peace, justice, and human dignity.

Don't miss these important updates:

**Iran**

**U.S. Policy Has Failed, So Why Are We Still Pursuing that Policy?**

Now, we at FCNL are increasingly worried that the confrontation between our two countries could get out of control and erupt into deadly violence, even if the worst intended is coercion. [Read Joe Volk’s analysis](#). CONTACT LINCOLN, PRYOR, BOOZMAN.

*FCNL Washington Newsletter, No. 716 (April 2007), special no. on IRAN. “Time to Talk with Iran,” “Iran Diary” by Joe Volk on his trip to Iran, etc.*

**Iran: A Policy of All Stick and No Carrots Will Not Work**

The Iranian government’s detention of 15 British sailors and the announcement that Iran may stop cooperating with international nuclear non-proliferation inspectors has led some in Congress to conclude that the U.S. must escalate its campaigns to pressure Tehran into compliance with international community demands. But the fact that a small border dispute has turned into a major diplomatic incident that could lead to war is more evidence of the need for face-to-face diplomatic negotiations between the U.S. and Iran. Find out why Executive Secretary Joe Volk believes a [policy of all sticks and no carrots will not work](#).

View this email as a web page. Dear james,
I've recently returned from an extraordinary journey to Iran, where we learned a remarkable lesson about the power of the individual - about the life-changing potential of what might be called "people-to-people" diplomacy.

This momentous trip followed a meeting last September in New York City with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and faith leaders from the U.S. We didn't shy away from the hard questions about Iran's nuclear program and President Ahmadinejad's anti-Israel comments. But at that meeting, he said that we all must come to Iran, where we could continue the conversation we had begun.

Given the current tension between the governments of Iran and the United States, AFSC felt such an invitation was worth pursuing. In partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee, we led a religious delegation to Iran in February to meet with Mr. Ahmadinejad and other governmental and religious officials.

When we entered the audience chamber, the foreign ministry official who was our guide mentioned that we were the first Americans to be in that room since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. In fact, we were the first official U.S. delegation to meet with an Iranian president in Tehran in almost thirty years.

At that meeting, I realized just how important it was for us to establish lines of communication, of dialogue, of respect. If we cannot talk with those who oppose us, how can we ever find opportunities for improved relations and pave the road to peace?

Coming to the table does not mean that we agree on all or even fundamental issues. Dialogue is not a reward or validation of someone's position. It is a means to begin the process of reconciliation.

With sincere appreciation,

Mary Ellen McNish,
General Secretary
American Friends Service Committee

Hello friends,

While thankfully, tensions have ratcheted down just a notch since the Iranians announced the release of the captured British sailors and marines on Wednesday, there is still a profound danger of a U.S. assault on Iran with horrific consequences for all concerned. The piece below by Noam Chomsky is therefore most timely, and I hope you will read it.

I will limit my comments to stating that it is not sufficient to just read articles like this. We need to broaden and deepen the peace movement, and this takes the active participation of literally millions of people day-in and day-out. Once a year peace marchers are needed, but we need many, many more activists than we currently have who take seriously the need to do this work consistently.

As Chomsky notes below: "The most effective barrier to a White House decision to launch a war is the kind of
organized popular opposition that frightened the political-military leadership enough in 1968 that they were reluctant to send more troops to Vietnam -- fearing, we learned from the Pentagon Papers, that they might need them for civil-disorder control."

I will also note that this essay was posted on TomDispatch, but I have not included Tom Engelhardt's introduction. It's good, but I know not everyone reads all the way down, and I wanted all to get to Chomsky. You can find the intro, as well as all the hyperlinks that will be deleted if you get your mail plain text format, at:

http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=182214

Yours for peace,
Mark Haim  Mid-Missouri Peaceworks  804-C E. Broadway
Columbia, MO 65201  573-875-0539

"What If Iran Had Invaded Mexico? Putting the Iran Crisis in Context"
By Noam Chomsky
http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=182214

Unsurprisingly, George W. Bush's announcement of a "surge" in Iraq came despite the firm opposition to any such move of Americans and the even stronger opposition of the (thoroughly irrelevant) Iraqis. It was accompanied by ominous official leaks and statements -- from Washington and Baghdad -- about how Iranian intervention in Iraq was aimed at disrupting our mission to gain victory, an aim which is (by definition) noble. What then followed was a solemn debate about whether serial numbers on advanced roadside bombs (IEDs) were really traceable to Iran; and, if so, to that country's Revolutionary Guards or to some even higher authority.

This "debate" is a typical illustration of a primary principle of sophisticated propaganda. In crude and brutal societies, the Party Line is publicly proclaimed and must be obeyed -- or else. What you actually believe is your own business and of far less concern. In societies where the state has lost the capacity to control by force, the Party Line is simply presupposed; then, vigorous debate is encouraged within the limits imposed by unstated doctrinal orthodoxy. The cruder of the two systems leads, naturally enough, to disbelief; the sophisticated variant gives an impression of openness and freedom, and so far more effectively serves to instill the Party Line. It becomes beyond question, beyond thought itself, like the air we breathe.

The debate over Iranian interference in Iraq proceeds without ridicule on the assumption that the United States owns the world. We did not, for example, engage in a similar debate in the 1980s about whether the U.S. was interfering in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, and I doubt that Pravda, probably recognizing the absurdity of the situation, sank to outrage about that fact (which American officials and our media, in any case, made no effort to conceal). Perhaps the official Nazi press also featured solemn debates about whether the Allies were interfering in sovereign Vichy France, though if so, sane people would then have collapsed in ridicule.

In this case, however, even ridicule -- notably absent -- would not suffice, because the charges against Iran are part of a drumbeat of pronouncements meant to mobilize support for escalation in Iraq and for an attack on Iran, the "source of the problem." The world is aghast at the possibility. Even in neighboring Sunni states, no friends of Iran, majorities, when asked, favor a nuclear-armed Iran over any military action against that country. From what limited information we have, it appears that significant parts of the U.S. military and intelligence communities are opposed to such an attack, along with almost the entire world, even more so than when the Bush administration and Tony Blair's Britain invaded Iraq, defying enormous popular opposition worldwide.

"The Iran Effect"

The results of an attack on Iran could be horrendous. After all, according to a recent study of "the Iraq effect" by terrorism specialists Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, using government and Rand Corporation data, the Iraq invasion has already led to a seven-fold increase in terror. The "Iran effect" would probably be far more severe and long-lasting. British military historian Corelli Barnett speaks for many when he warns that "an attack on Iran would effectively launch World War III."

What are the plans of the increasingly desperate clique that narrowly holds political power in the U.S.? We cannot know. Such state planning is, of course, kept secret in the interests of "security." Review of the declassified record reveals that there is considerable merit in that claim -- though only if we understand "security" to mean the security of the Bush administration against their domestic enemy, the population in whose name they act.

Even if the White House clique is not planning war, naval deployments, support for secessionist movements and acts of terror within Iran, and other provocations could easily lead to an accidental war. Congressional resolutions would not provide much of a barrier. They invariably permit "national security" exemptions, opening holes wide
enough for the **several aircraft-carrier battle groups** soon to be in the Persian Gulf to pass through -- as long as an unscrupulous leadership issues proclamations of doom (as Condoleezza Rice did with those "mushroom clouds" over American cities back in 2002). And the concocting of the sorts of incidents that "justify" such attacks is a familiar practice. Even the worst monsters feel the need for such justification and adopt the device: Hitler's defense of innocent Germany from the "wild terror" of the Poles in 1939, after they had rejected his wise and generous proposals for peace, is but one example.

The most effective barrier to a White House decision to launch a war is the kind of organized popular opposition that frightened the political-military leadership enough in 1968 that they were reluctant to send more troops to Vietnam -- fearing, we learned from the *Pentagon Papers*, that they might need them for civil-disorder control.

Doubtless Iran's government merits harsh condemnation, including for its recent actions that have inflamed the crisis. It is, however, useful to ask how we would act if Iran had invaded and occupied Canada and Mexico and was arresting U.S. government representatives there on the grounds that they were resisting the Iranian occupation (called "liberation," of course). Imagine as well that Iran was deploying massive naval forces in the Caribbean and issuing credible threats to launch a wave of attacks against a vast range of sites -- nuclear and otherwise -- in the United States, if the U.S. government did not immediately terminate all its nuclear energy programs (and, naturally, dismantle all its nuclear weapons). Suppose that all of this happened after Iran had overthrown the government of the U.S. and installed a vicious tyrant (as the US did to Iran in 1953), then later supported a Russian invasion of the U.S. that killed millions of people (just as the U.S. supported Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Iran in 1980, killing hundreds of thousands of Iranians, a figure comparable to millions of Americans). Would we watch quietly?

It is easy to understand an observation by one of Israel's leading military historians, Martin van Creveld. After the U.S. invaded Iraq, knowing it to be defenseless, he noted, "Had the Iranians not tried to build nuclear weapons, they would be crazy."

Surely no sane person wants Iran (or any nation) to develop nuclear weapons. A reasonable resolution of the present crisis would permit Iran to develop nuclear energy, in accord with its rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but not nuclear weapons. Is that outcome feasible? It would be, given one condition: that the U.S. and Iran were functioning democratic societies in which public opinion had a significant impact on public policy.

As it happens, this solution has overwhelming support among Iranians and Americans, who generally are in agreement on nuclear issues. The Iranian-American consensus includes the complete elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere (82% of Americans); if that cannot yet be achieved because of elite opposition, then at least a "nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East that would include both Islamic countries and Israel" (71% of Americans). Seventy-five percent of Americans prefer building better relations with Iran to threats of force. In brief, if public opinion were to have a significant influence on state policy in the U.S. and Iran, resolution of the crisis might be at hand, along with much more far-reaching solutions to the global nuclear conundrum.

**Promoting Democracy -- at Home**

These facts suggest a possible way to prevent the current crisis from exploding, perhaps even into some version of World War III. That awesome threat might be averted by pursuing a familiar proposal: democracy promotion -- this time at home, where it is badly needed. Democracy promotion at home is certainly feasible and, although we cannot carry out such a project directly in Iran, we could act to improve the prospects of the courageous reformers and oppositionists who are seeking to achieve just that. Among such figures who are, or should be, well-known, would be Saeed Hajjarian, Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, and Akbar Ganji, as well as those who, as usual, remain nameless, among them labor activists about whom we hear very little; those who publish the *Iranian Workers Bulletin* may be a case in point.

We can best improve the prospects for democracy promotion in Iran by sharply reversing state policy here so that it reflects popular opinion. That would entail ceasing to make the regular threats that are a gift to Iranian hardliners. These are bitterly condemned by Iranians truly concerned with democracy promotion (unlike those "supporters" who flaunt democracy slogans in the West and are lauded as grand "idealists" despite their clear record of visceral hatred for democracy).

Democracy promotion in the United States could have far broader consequences. In Iraq, for instance, a firm timetable for withdrawal would be initiated at once, or very soon, in accord with the will of the overwhelming majority of Iraqis and a significant majority of Americans. Federal budget priorities would be virtually reversed. Where spending is rising, as in military supplemental bills to conduct the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it would sharply decline. Where spending is steady or declining (health, education, job training, the promotion of energy conservation and renewable energy sources, veterans benefits, funding for the UN and UN peacekeeping operations, and so on),
it would sharply increase. Bush's tax cuts for people with incomes over $200,000 a year would be immediately rescinded.

The U.S. would have adopted a national health-care system long ago, rejecting the privatized system that sports twice the per-capita costs found in similar societies and some of the worst outcomes in the industrial world. It would have rejected what is widely regarded by those who pay attention as a "fiscal train wreck" in-the-making. The U.S. would have ratified the Kyoto Protocol to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions and undertaken still stronger measures to protect the environment. It would allow the UN to take the lead in international crises, including in Iraq. After all, according to opinion polls, since shortly after the 2003 invasion, a large majority of Americans have wanted the UN to take charge of political transformation, economic reconstruction, and civil order in that land.

If public opinion mattered, the U.S. would accept UN Charter restrictions on the use of force, contrary to a bipartisan consensus that this country, alone, has the right to resort to violence in response to potential threats, real or imagined, including threats to our access to markets and resources. The U.S. (along with others) would abandon the Security Council veto and accept majority opinion even when in opposition to it. The UN would be allowed to regulate arms sales; while the U.S. would cut back on such sales and urge other countries to do so, which would be a major contribution to reducing large-scale violence in the world. Terror would be dealt with through diplomatic and economic measures, not force, in accord with the judgment of most specialists on the topic but again in diametric opposition to present-day policy.

Furthermore, if public opinion influenced policy, the U.S. would have diplomatic relations with Cuba, benefiting the people of both countries (and, incidentally, U.S. agribusiness, energy corporations, and others), instead of standing virtually alone in the world in imposing an embargo (joined only by Israel, the Republic of Palau, and the Marshall Islands). Washington would join the broad international consensus on a two-state settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict, which (with Israel) it has blocked for 30 years -- with scattered and temporary exceptions -- and which it still blocks in word, and more importantly in deed, despite fraudulent claims of its commitment to diplomacy. The U.S. would also equalize aid to Israel and Palestine, cutting off aid to either party that rejected the international consensus.

Evidence on these matters is reviewed in my book Failed States as well as in The Foreign Policy Disconnect by Benjamin Page (with Marshall Bouton), which also provides extensive evidence that public opinion on foreign (and probably domestic) policy issues tends to be coherent and consistent over long periods. Studies of public opinion have to be regarded with caution, but they are certainly highly suggestive.

Democracy promotion at home, while no panacea, would be a useful step towards helping our own country become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international order (to adopt the term used for adversaries), instead of being an object of fear and dislike throughout much of the world. Apart from being a value in itself, functioning democracy at home holds real promise for dealing constructively with many current problems, international and domestic, including those that literally threaten the survival of our species.

Noam Chomsky is the author of Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy (Metropolitan Books), just published in paperback, among many other works.

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"Acquiescence in Bush's monstrous war in Iraq has amply demonstrated the political elite's limited capacity for introspection, independent thought and civic courage." Stephen F. Cohen, The Nation, July 10, 2006

FOOTNOTE ON BRITISH SAILORS INCIDENT

The botched US raid that led to the hostage crisis
http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article2414760.ece

A failed American attempt to abduct two senior Iranian security officers on an official visit to northern Iraq was the starting
pistol for a crisis that 10 weeks later led to Iranians seizing 15 British sailors and Marines.

Early on the morning of 11 January, helicopter-born US forces launched a surprise raid on a long-established Iranian liaison office in the city of Arbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. They captured five relatively junior Iranian officials whom the US accuses of being intelligence agents and still holds.

In reality the US attack had a far more ambitious objective, The Independent has learned. The aim of the raid, launched without informing the Kurdish authorities, was to seize two men at the very heart of the Iranian security establishment.


As has been well-documented, many in the Bush administration have set their sights on taking their "War on Terror" to Iran. And as we watch US warships conduct exercises off the Iranian Coast and listen to the Deja Vu rhetoric of the Right-Wing noise machine drumming up support for more war, the hypothetical "military option" looms too close for comfort.

CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES


Meredith Oakley in ADG (8-26-07) writes encouragingly of citizen engagement, "Government: What We Make It." She quotes Ben Franklin among others on our system of government: Asked what kind of government we had, he replied: "A republic, if you can keep it." We, the People!

Phone: (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.
Fayetteville office: 251-1380. Lincoln's staff is better informed than Boozman's (see below), but obviously (her vote to join Bush in appropriating $95 billion more to keep the occupation going and her vote to further extend warrantless phone taps)) they need a lot of education. Call her and her staff.

Getting to her office:
Northwestern Regional Office
4 South College Avenue, Suite 205, Google Maps puts the marker 308 feet south of Meadow Street.
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 251-1224; FAX (479) 251-1410

Staff members:
Community Affairs Specialist: John Hicks, Tamika S. Edwards and Kim Mullen, Office Manager\Special Projects Coordinator Cydney Pearce

State Central Office
912 West Fourth Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
TEL: (501) 375-2993
FAX: (501) 375-7064
Donna Kay Yeargan
State Director
Rod Sweetman
Arkansas Military Liaison\Caseworker (Academy Appointments, Immigration, Military, Prisons (Federal), and Veterans)

--Senator Mark Pryor: Web Site (see contact link): www.pryor.senate.gov; http://pryor.senate.gov/contact/

Pryor has no office in NWA, so call or write him and his staff in DC: Washington Office: 217 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510-0403. Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908
Phone: (501) 324-6336 Fax: (501) 324-5320.
Congressman John Boozman, District 3, 12 counties from Benton to Washington
Lowell office: 479-725-0400. 213 W. Monroe, Suite K, 72745. Boozman’s new office in Lowell is located at 213 West Monroe in Lowell between I 540 and Business 71. Go there, talk to Boozman’s staff members. They need your explanation of reality and values. To reach that office take Exit 78 off I - 540 and go east on Hwy 264 which is also West Monroe. The office is in the Puppy Creek Plaza, past the McDonald’s on the right. His suite is in the back of the complex to the left. Or write or call. Ms. McClure is Assistant Chief of Staff for the Lowell office, Ms. Breazeal focuses on gangs, and Ms. Stacy Davis is constituent staff member.
Harrison office: 870-741-6900; 402 N. Walnut, Suite 210, Harrison 72601.
DC address: 1708 Longworth House Office Bldng., Washington, DC 20515; 202-225-4301. Leslie Parker, appointments secretary: 202-225-4301. (Or she was, let me know if it’s now someone else.)
END OF NEWSLETTER NO. 4 ON IRAN