

The



LOWDOWN

Edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer ♦ Vol.9 No.11 ♦ November 2007

"This notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous. Having said that, all options are on the table."

GEORGE W. BUSH

With the encouragement of Democrats-from-Mars

BushCheney really is planning to attack Iran!

LOOK OUT—HERE THEY COME AGAIN! Bush & Buckshot are riding their little stick horses, waving the bloody flag of 9/11, demonizing another Muslim nation, shouting warnings about weapons of mass destruction, bellowing for regime change, and generally trying to whoop up a new war. Having done so well in Iraq, George W and Cheney are pushing feverishly to hype up a national-security threat and commit our nation, our bedraggled military, our depleted treasury, and our country's already-tarnished name to another of their fantasyland, neocon, preemptive invasions of a sovereign people who are doing no harm to us. Their target this time: IRAN.

You might be thinking, oh, come on, Hightower, surely not. You're paranoid—even the Bushites aren't that crazy. I wish.

The drums of war

For such leading neocon zealots as Norman Podhoretz, bombing and even invading Iran are about protecting "our" Mideastern oil, strengthening Israel's regional power, and continuing Western control of the restive Muslim majority in the Middle East. Podhoretz and other true believers assert that there's an urgent need for Israel and the West to crush Iran's Muslim government now, frantically wailing that it intends to destroy America and control the world. Even though Iran has made no threats to the U.S., the neocons see regime change there as the key to winning "World War IV" (they insist that the Cold War was World War III) against what they have dubbed "Islamofacism."

How nutty are they? Podhoretz concedes that by attacking such an influential Islamic nation, Bush would "unleash a wave of anti-Americanism all over the world that will make the anti-Americanism we've experienced so far look like a lovefest." Yet this Dr. Strangelove maniacally declares, "I pray with all my heart that he will." Now there's a prayer to a truly fiendish god!

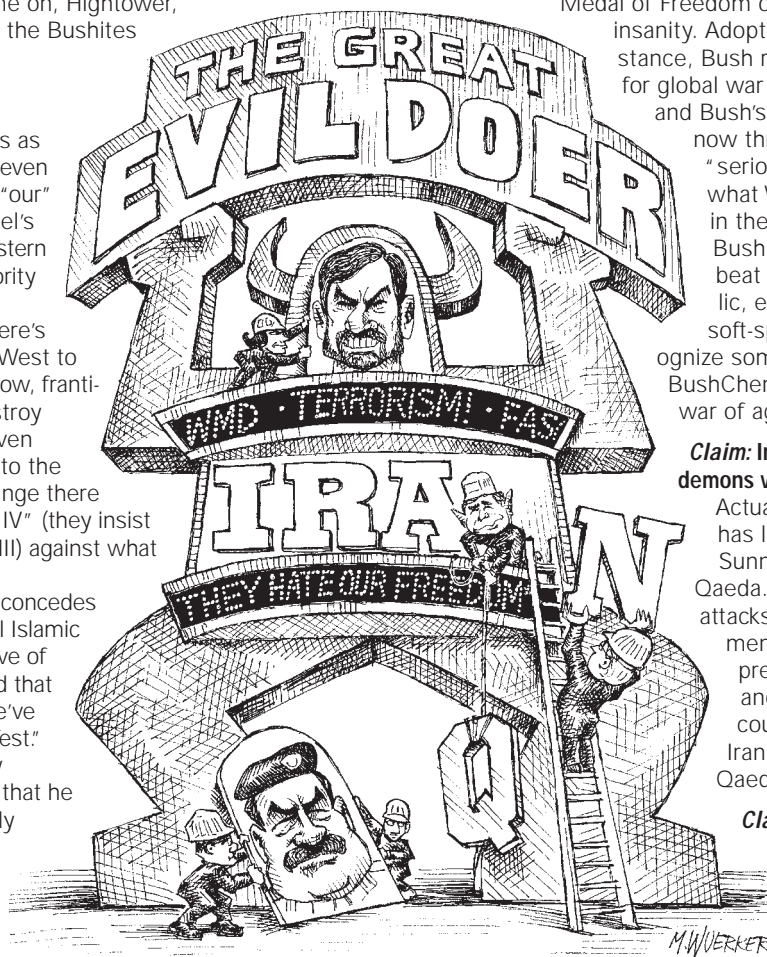
George W, who is so besotted by Podhoretz that he has bestowed the Presidential

Medal of Freedom on him, has bought into this guy's insanity. Adopting Podhoretz's inflamed doomsday stance, Bush recently accused Iran of preparing for global war (though W only ranks it as WW III), and Bush's bombastic sidekick, Cheney, has now threatened that Tehran will suffer "serious consequences" if it doesn't do what Washington wants. Just as they did in the run-up to their 2003 Iraq attack, the Bushites are now pounding out a drumbeat of propaganda to soften up the public, enlist the compliant media, and cow soft-spined Democratic leaders. You'll recognize some familiar themes (a.k.a. lies) in BushCheney's rationale for a "preventive" war of aggression against Iran:

Claim: Iran is in cahoots with al Qaeda, the demons who crashbombed America on 9/11.

Actually, no. Iran is a Shiite nation that has long been in opposition to the Sunni-exclusive Islam preached by al Qaeda. Indeed, even before al Qaeda's attacks on America, Iran's leaders vehemently opposed the terrorist group's presence in neighboring Afghanistan, and Iran was one of the first Muslim countries to condemn the 9/11 assault. Iran also has willingly turned over al Qaeda suspects to the U.S.

Claim: WMDs! Iran is on the brink of making a nuclear bomb, thus posing an imminent threat to America and to our national interests.



RUDY, MITT, AND FRED IN FANTASIA

Gosh, I want to go to GOPland. What a wonderful place it is: sunny skies every day, bluebirds of happiness everywhere, and an always-booming economy that's spreading wealth to everyone!

At least that's the picture that the top Republican presidential contenders paint. Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney, and Fred Thompson are all millionaires, and in their fantasy bubble, there's a golden economy with low inflation, high employment, free trade, Wall Street wealth, and endless economic growth. As the bubbly Mitt Romney put it, "Well, I mean, the market is a wonderful thing... the sky's the limit."

Meanwhile, back down here on earth, America's workaday majority is living in a different world. On the very day these Pollyannas were enthusing about low inflation, George W's own energy department reported that the cost of home heating oil will jump 22 percent this winter. No inflation? Have any of these millionaires bought a gallon of milk recently or paid a health-insurance premium?

Has their happy bubble not been pierced by the news that 2.2 million more Americans were added to the uninsured rolls last year? That's the sixth straight year that the ranks of the uninsured have grown, leaving 47 million people in this country with no health coverage—the highest total on record.

And sure, there's high employment. But at poverty wages! Most Americans have seen their incomes fall in these guys' "boom economy."

MAKING "THE LIST"

Do we riff-raff know how hard life is for the richy-rich—the billionaire class? Its members have got half

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Not so. Iran has no nuclear weapons and is nowhere near having the ability to build one. As a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran has the right to enrich uranium to make electrical power (something our own country does every day). The Iranian government regularly allows inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency access to its nuclear facilities, and this UN agency (which is the one that turned out to be right about the lack of WMDs in Iraq) has found no evidence that Iran is trying to make a bomb. Even if it were, it would be years away from having one. There certainly is no imminent threat of an Iranian nuclear assault on any country, including our own, which is 7,000 miles away. Plus, Bush's own former top commander in Iraq, Gen. John Abizaid, points out that the U.S. lived with a nuclear Soviet Union throughout the Cold War and now lives with a number of nuclear nations, including China and Pakistan, so "there are ways to live with a nuclear Iran." It's simply a lie that the Bushites must rush to war to keep us from being nuked.

Claim: Those dastardly Iranians are meddling in our war in Iraq by supplying weapons to our enemies and by sending intelligence agents to undermine Iraq's government.

Not likely. While some Iranian-made weapons have turned up in Iraq, there've been no findings of a large or regular influx and no evi-

dence that the Iranian government itself is even tacitly behind it. Remember that Iran's leaders are Shiites who do not like al Qaeda and do not support the Sunni insurgency, so the only Iraqi force that Tehran would want to help is the Shiite majority that Bush himself has put in charge. As for Iranian "operatives" in Iraq, the two countries share long familial and cultural relationships, so there are a lot of Iranians in Iraq all the time. In fact, Iraq's Shiite-led government is pro-Iranian and has many economic and even military agreements with Tehran. Indeed, when U.S. troops "captured" a group of Iranians in a Baghdad hotel this summer, they turned out to be energy experts invited to Iraq by Prime Minister Maliki, who had them released.

On the warpath

Not that Iran's military/political/theocratic leaders are a bunch of sweethearts, by any means. That country's loudmouth, Holocaust-denying president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, makes himself an easy target for Bushite demonization, and all peace-seeking governments must be vigilant toward Iran's potential for belligerence. This requires steady engagement, smart diplomacy, military subtlety, and careful consideration of the complexities embodied within Iran's rich, proud, 6,000-year-old culture.

Unfortunately, BushCheney doesn't do engagement, diplomacy, subtlety, or complexity. If there's

an international need to shell a pecan, the Bushites go at it with a sledgehammer, blissfully ignorant of their own ignorance. Do you think, for example, that George W is even aware that President Ahmadinejad can rant and rave all he wants, but he is not in charge of his country's foreign policy, which is in the firm grip of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei?

But realities did not deter Bush and the neocons from miring our country in Iraq, and now they are aggressively putting us on a path to war with Iran.

- **In August, Bush announced**, "I have authorized our military commanders in Iraq to confront Tehran's murderous activities."
- **Investigative journalist** Seymour Hersh revealed last month that Cheney has instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to draw up plans for attacking Iran.
- **Hersh added** that the bombing would be accompanied by selected "incursions" into Iran by U.S. Special Forces units.
- **The London Telegraph reported** in September that the Pentagon has developed a list of some 2,000 bombing targets in Iran.
- **There are plans** for both a limited "surgical" bombing of the Iranian military's training sites and a broad bombing that would include nuclear-power facilities and other targets.

■ **Two aircraft carriers**, a flotilla of U.S. Navy warships, and numerous cruise missiles have been put in place at the Strait of Hormuz, on Iran's southern shore. In fact, half of our navy's warships now sit within striking distance of Iran.

■ **The Pentagon** has suddenly started building a new U.S. military base near the Iraqi town of Badrah, right up against Iran's border.

■ **In September**, Israel launched a preemptive raid in Syria to destroy a construction site that Israelis claim might have been the beginning of a nuclear reactor—even though Syria has no nuclear-weapons program and could legally build a reactor for electric power. Cheney gave U.S. approval for Israel's strike only after leaders there refused his pleas that they bomb Iran's

DoSomething!

Here are some great groups to contact to help stop the BushCheney march to war with Iran:

- **Institute for Policy Studies**
ips-dc.org
202-234-9382
- **CodePink**
codepink4peace.org
310-827-4320
- **United for Peace & Justice**
unitedforpeace.org
212-868-5545
- **Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy**
lcnp.org
212-818-1861
- **Council for a Livable World**
clw.org
202-543-4100
- **Granny Peace Brigade**
grannypeacebrigade.org
212-533-2125
- **Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors**
objector.org
510-465-1617
- **Progressive Democrats of America**
pdamerica.org
877-239-2093
- **True Majority**
truemajority.org
802-860-6858
- **Peace Action**
peace-action.org
301-565-4050
- **Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Weapons Danger**
mci-nwd.org
202-544-8989
- **National Iranian-American Council**
niacouncil.org
202-386-6325
- **U.S. Labor Against the War**
uslaboragainstawar.org
202-521-5265
- **World Can't Wait**
worldcantwait.org
866-973-4463
- **Farms Not Arms**
farmsnotarms.org
931-964-2590
- **MoveOn**
Moveon.org
- **Women for Peace in Iran**
women4peace.org
- **Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Action in Iran**
campaigniran.org
- **Hands Off the People of Iran**
hopoi.org
- **StopIranWar.com**
(project of WesPac and VoteVets.org)
- **StopTheWarNow.net**
- **IsIranNext.org**
- **DontAttackIran.org**
- **Libertarians4Peace.net**

nuclear-power plant instead.

Yes, the U.S. Air Force and Navy have the razzle-dazzle firepower to destroy 2,000 Iranian targets in short order (not to mention thousands of Iranian civilians, for many of the targets are in populated places). *But what happens the next day?* Remember those neocon promises, just before the bombing of Iraq in 2003, that our troops would be showered with rose petals by a grateful public? Here we go again. Still intoxicated with the same ideological delusions, the neocons offer nothing but vague assurances that the Iranian masses will greet our forces as liberators and spontaneously overthrow the Tehran regime. In fact, opposition leaders inside Iran say that even the talk of a U.S. military attack is disastrous for their movement, for

such reports strengthen hardliners in Iran and weaken those who want to reach out to the West. Iranians are Iranians first, and when a foreign power threatens to bomb or invade their country, they unite.

On Day Two (as well as on Days Three, Four, and so on), Iran most certainly will respond, and the results could be truly hellish for America. That furious wave of anti-Americanism that Podhoretz gleefully predicts would have explosive results in Iraq (further endangering our besieged troops), in such neighboring countries as Saudi Arabia, in the cities of Europe, and right here in the States, where our own citizens could become retaliatory targets.

Then there's oil. Iran and its allies could block the narrow Strait of Hormuz, which connects all of the oil-producing Persian Gulf states to their foreign markets. Up

to twenty-five percent of the world's oil must pass through this strategic waterway, and shutting it down would cause prices to zoom astronomically, creating havoc for our oil-soaked economy.

What to do?

You might hope that cooler heads will prevail. Republican political operatives, for example, are aghast at the possible '08 fallout ("Every Republican is going to be defeated," cried one). Also, the generals don't want this—they know that they don't have the manpower for a real war with Iran. Nor will Bush have a "coalition of the willing" this time—even the dog-gishly loyal British government thinks attacking Iran is madness. Then there's Putin of Russia, who pointedly traveled to Iran last month to declare that no one should "even think of making use of force in this region."

However, as a former Bush official told Hersh, "Cheney doesn't give a rat's ass" about any of that, "and neither does the president." The chickenhawks are screeching for war, and they are immune to sanity.

Well, surely, you say, the Democrats will finally stand up to these knuckleheads. After all, Congress has all the power it needs to say no [see last month's *Lowdown*], and the time for saying it is now, before the shooting starts, before the Bushites start hiding behind the rhetorical cloak of "support the troops."

But the Democrats' congressional leadership is already waffling, and some of their presidential candidates are joining Bush in rattling our sabers at Iran, hoping to appear commander-in-chiefish. Astonishingly, the Senate passed a resolution on September 26 by a 76-22 vote that endorses Bush's

a dozen luxurious houses around the world, servants galore, private jets and helicopters, their own chef... but what if they don't make "it"?

The "it" is the annual *Forbes* magazine list of the 400 richest Americans. This is the ultimate social register, and this year's compilation shows that being a billionaire no longer assures you of making the cut. In fact, being included among the 400 now requires \$1.3 billion in wealth. This means that 82 certified American billionaires failed to qualify. How embarrassing is that!

One problem for run-of-the-mill billionaires is that lots of Wall Street speculators have zoomed to a level of über-wealth, thanks to hedge-fund and private-equity scams. Of the 45 newcomers to this year's *Forbes* index, half made their bundles in such schemes—and bumped off the list the honcho of Starbucks and an heiress to the Campbell Soup fortune. See... it's a cruel world.

Now the high-flying Wall Streeters are frantically blocking efforts to tax their pots of gold. They wanna make next year's list!

SUBSIDIZING DISASTER

Like some B-movie space alien, "The Thing" is back. And this time, it's... the nuclear-power industry.

After the meltdown at the nuclear plant at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, in 1979, nuke power finally seemed to be dead in America. Fission plants were too expensive to build, the multibillion-dollar taxpayer subsidies were ridiculous, the potential for atomic catastrophe was chilling, and the unresolved question of where to put tons of radioactive waste was damning.

Yet, like a grotesque phoenix, here nuclear

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power comes again. Why? One word: BushCheney. The big utilities, along with such powerhouse nuclear equipment makers as General Electric, were generous funders of George W's run for the White House—and their payback was the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which pumps the nuke-power biz full of new government subsidies.

This bill offers \$125 million in tax breaks for each new nuclear plant, plus loan guarantees of 80 percent of a plant's cost (including cost overruns). Utilities also receive exemptions from legal liability in case of catastrophic incidents. And these mega-corporations won't be held responsible for the disposal of the nuclear waste!

Our tax dollars should be invested in safe, clean, renewable energy and in conservation.

WHAT TORTURE IS

Bill Clinton got roundly ridiculed and then impeached by Congress for a sexual encounter that he tried to dismiss by quibbling over what the meaning of "is" is.

Yet, we now have a president who is engaged in a far more damning constitutional encounter that he is trying to dismiss by quibbling over what the meaning of "torture" is. Why isn't he facing an impeachment inquiry?

From Abu Ghraib to Guantanamo to extraordinary renditions, Bush and Gang have violated our own laws and international treaties that flatly prohibit torture of war prisoners. Yet Bush & Company keep trying to excuse their abhorrent behavior by writing secret memos to themselves redefining torture as...well...not torture. Of course, Bush refused to show us the memos, and his staff has even attacked the media for revealing that they exist!

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confrontation with Tehran! The Kyl-Lieberman amendment buys into the Bushite myths about Iran, calls for the entire Iranian military to be designated "Global Terrorists" under a Bush executive order, and states that it should be U.S. policy to use all instruments of our national power (specifically including "military instruments") to confront the "destabilizing influence" of Iran.

Democrats—especially Sen. Hillary Clinton—are now trying to deny that their vote for this resolution gave Bush a free pass to go after Iran, claiming that the resolution was only meant to apply to Iranian interference in Iraq. Intentions are nice, but Bush is not. The amendment's language plainly allows plenty of wiggle room, and the Bushites have shown that they will interpret even an errant sneeze as permission to do whatever they want. Besides, why the hell would Democrats pass *anything* involving the expansion of this horrible war? Voters put them in charge of Congress to go the opposite way, not to buck up Bush with a new piece of warmongering that Sen. Jim Webb has called "Cheney's fondest pipe dream."

We the People have to be the leaders. More than ever, we have to get noisy. We can't just wring our hands—there are things we can do:

■ **First**, connect with our allies in Congress, including the 22 senators who voted against the Kyl-Lieberman surrender to Bush (list available at hightowerlowdown.org). Let antiwar lawmakers know

you're behind them, ask them to get still noisier on this, and ask that they develop an inside-outside strategy to rally and focus our national outrage against expanding Bush's Iraq disaster into Iran.

■ **Second**, demand that your Congress critters (whatever their stripe) use all their congressional powers (to control spending, launch investigations, declare war, etc.) to say that the president can take no preemptive military action against Iran without a full, constitutionally mandated declaration of war by Congress.

■ **Third**, connect with any and all of the savvy grassroots groups in this issue's "Do Something" box. Use their information, sign all of their petitions, spread their materials, and join their actions.

■ **Fourth**, talk, talk, talk, and talk some more—in church, at school, with your neighbors and cowork-

Ike speaks

At a news conference on August 11, 1954, the following exchange occurred between NBC news correspondent Ray Scherer and President Dwight Eisenhower:

Q: *Mr. President, there seems to be increasing suggestions that we should embark on a preventive war with the Communist world, some of these suggestions by people in high places.*

A: All of us have heard this term "preventive war" since the earliest days of Hitler... A preventive war, to my mind, is an impossibility today. How could you have one if one of its features would be several cities lying in ruins, several cities where many, many thousands of people would be dead and injured and mangled, the transportation systems destroyed, sanitation implements and systems all gone? That isn't preventive war; that is war. I don't believe there is such a thing [as preventive war]; and frankly, I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing.

ers, at town hall meetings, in family phone calls or visits, on talk radio, at candidate forums, in supermarket check-out lines... wherever you can find an ear. The vast majority of Americans have not heard what Bush is up to, and they won't like it. The most effective way to reach them and activate them is by personal contact—i.e., you. Talk to someone about it every day.

■ **Fifth**, don't let Democrats waffle. Iraq was Bush's war (and his political debacle), but Iran would be a product of a Democratic-controlled Congress, and they will be responsible either for allowing it...or for stopping it.

■ **Sixth**, come up with your own action idea, and let the rest of us know how we can support and spread it.

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BUSH/CHENEY REALLY IS PLANNING TO ATTACK IRAN

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