

Iranian “Democracy” and the “Intelligence” Summit

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While George Bush, the man who controls the trigger of the world’s greatest nuclear arsenal, expresses his fear that a **“non-transparent”** and nuclear Iran might use its non-existent nuclear weapons to blackmail the world, and his Secretary of State tells the media that **the time for talking with the regime in Tehran is over, a little noticed news article appeared on the UPI wire**. The essence of the story was that a group that calls itself the **Foundation for Democracy in Iran (FDI)** had received word from unnamed sources in Iran that the Iranian Air Force is moving its Shabab missiles onto mobile platforms and that this meant that they were preparing to test a nuclear device by March 20, 2006. How one concludes that the movement of the missiles to portable platforms is a prelude to a nuclear test and not just a defensive move in light of **the growing threat of a military attack on Iran** is not stated.

The aspect of the story that interested me, however, was not the dubious conclusion that Iran had a nuclear device that was test-ready (mostly because no other source seems to believe that this is true), but the nature of the source for the story. What is the Foundation for Democracy in Iran? Who funds them? A concerted web search found very few details about the organization. Indeed, its **website** is barely in existence and has only three or four active links. One is to a collection of rightwing and neocon blogs titled *Blogs in Support of Real Democracy in Iran*. The names of the blogs include such titles as *Blogs for Condi*, *Love America First*, *American Imperialist*, *Blogs for FOX*, and *Fundamentally Right* — you get the picture. Another link is to a subscription form for the organization’s newsletter titled *Iran Brief* — for \$1,100 a year. In terms of its listed members, there is only one. That is **Kenneth Timmerman** — neocon extraordinaire, member of the fear-mongering imperial project that calls itself the **Committee on the Present Danger**, and contributor to the neocon rag *National Review* and its ultra-right counterpart *FrontPagemag.com*. Interesting to note is this phrase that appears on the site: “Learn more about (the FDI Appeal) and *what you can do to stop Iranian regime nuclear blackmail!*” — **the exact same phrase expressed by George Bush on January 23, 2006**.

So where does this so-called foundation get its money? According to the National Endowment for Democracy’s website, **the FDI received some funding from the National Endowment for Democracy** — a nominally private project known for its subversion of elections in Central and South America and its machinations in concert with the CIA in various so-called popular movements in eastern Europe and the Middle East. Despite high-sounding press releases that usually trumpet beliefs in human rights and so on, the aforementioned “movements” are usually led by men and women who want a piece of the resource pie in whatever country their movement is in. Other FDI monies seem to have come from private donations, including some from the organization of Iranian exiles fronted by the former Shah’s son. This group of Iranians are interested in not only overthrowing the mullahs in Tehran, they would like to see a reinstitution of the monarchy.

For those who are historically challenged, it was the excesses of the Shah's regime that brought about the Iranian revolution in the first place.

While there are a multitude of Iranian exile groups hoping to see the current Iranian government fall, the FDI appears to be the only one that lists no Iranians in its leadership. Indeed, Timmerman seems to be the only person willing to publicly claim any connection to the group. Knowing his rabid support of Tel Aviv's designs for the Middle East and Gulf regions, it is fair to conclude that this group as it currently exists is but a front for Israel's expansionist plans...

The Intelligence Summit

Who are those fellow imperial cheerleaders with whom Mr. Timmerman wants to make "revolution" on Iran? Perhaps another link on the FDI's skeleton of a website can provide us with some clues. It is this link that announces that the FDI is invited to speak at The Intelligence Summit. This event, which is billed as "a non-partisan, non-profit, neutral forum that uses private charitable funds to bring together for the first time the intelligence agencies of the free world and the emerging democracies," is taking place at the Hyatt Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia over the weekend of February 17-20, 2006. The stated purpose of the summit is to provide members of the intelligence, espionage, counter-terrorism, and counter-intelligence agencies from the so-called free world an opportunity to compare notes and develop strategies to stay in power and defeat those that oppose them. The quasi-private nature of the event appears to be merely a pretext for the individuals attending to keep some kind of legal separation from any policy-making powers they might have. In other words, as long as the event is nominally unofficial, the attendees are free to make statements and deals that they could not make in a more official arrangement. The list of speakers and board members is almost one hundred names long and includes such well known empire builders like former CIA Chief James Woolsey; Washington insiders Michael Ledeen and Richard Perle; and lesser known imperial cheerleaders such as Colonel Oded Shoham of the Israel Defense Forces and retired US Army General Paul Vallely, who currently provides analysis for FOXNews and has decades of experience in military psy-ops and counter-intelligence. Titles of the seminars include *Business Intelligence in Latin America: The Case of Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico*, *Eyewitness to Terror: Islam's Holy March Against The West*, *Identifying and Protecting Trade Secrets in Public, and Private Sector and Electronic Surveillance Systems*.

The summit's sponsors include various internet companies hoping to make a buck off the growing market in homeland security and anti-hacking technologies, as well as companies involved in private security operations around the globe. The primary sponsor, however, is the subject of controversy and is currently denied entry into the United States because of his indictment on various charges in Russia and Israel. His name is Michael Chernoff (or Cherney) of the **Michael Cherney Foundation**. Cherney is well-known among supporters of Israel and has contributed millions of dollars to various organizations on the right end of Israel's political spectrum, as well as several thousands to the US Republican Party. Cherney's sponsorship is obviously important to the summit's organizers, as they are urging attendees to lobby the US State Department and get Mr. Cherney a visa so he can accept an award that weekend in February.

Like the governments and organizations most of these people are connected to, the intent of the military members, businessmen, spies, and their apologists attending this summit is

not democracy but the maintenance and expansion of the US-Israel-Britain axis of greed. It's quite unlikely that one would find much opposition to NSA-Pentagon eavesdropping or Gitmo torture at the Crystal City Hyatt the weekend of this conference. One gets the feeling that the attendees won't be discussing multilateralism or transparency at this gathering. Openness is not a priority among these folks.

Ron Jacobs is author of The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground, just republished by Verso. Jacobs' essay on Big Bill Broonzy is featured in CounterPunch's new collection on music, art and sex: Serpents in the Garden. He can be reached at <ronjacobs3625@charter.net>.

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