

More Smoke on the Horizon in the Middle East War Theater

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America is not the only one present in the region [meaning the Middle East and Central Asia]. We are present, from Khost to Kandahar in Afghanistan. We are present in the Persian Gulf and we can be present in Iraq.”

-Rear-Admiral Ali Shamkhani (August 18, 2004)

The march to war in the Middle East is well underway. Outgoing Prime Minister Tony Blair has said that diplomacy is the best way forward with Iran, but appends his statements by saying that he can not “absolutely predict every set of circumstances,” which means that war can not be ruled out. In this regard, Gordon Brown is no different. [1] The man scheduled to be the next British Prime Minister once Tony Blair steps down (June 27, 2007), has refused to rule out war against Iran and its allies.

The war dossiers against Iran and Syria, the last two bastions of independence in the Middle East, are being built. General Wesley Clark, the former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO in Europe, has confirmed that the White House has been plotting a course based on a major military roadmap in the Middle East, Central Asia, and East Africa that would start in Afghanistan and Iraq and end with Iran. [2] Clark has stated that, after Afghanistan, seven additional nations were on the the Pentagon’s list to be attacked and invaded over a five-year period: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and finally Iran. [3]

The geographic boundaries for these wars all fall within the military jurisdiction of United States Central Command (CENTCOM). This five-year period began with the invasion of Iraq in mid-2003 and, if the American former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO in Europe is correct, it should end approximately in mid-2008 or the last war could be initiated by this point in time. It should be noted that the second presidential term of George W. Bush Jr. ends in January of 2009. Is it possible that in 2001, when the Pentagon outlined this military roadmap, that the re-election of President Bush Jr. to a second term in office in 2005, had already been envisaged, in relation to these war plans?

General Franks, the former Commander of CENTCOM, in a late-2003 interview said that he believed that another crisis for the United States could in effect result in the suspension of the American Constitution and the establishment in the U.S. of a military form of

government:

“...the free world, loses what it cherishes most, and that is freedom and liberty we’ve seen for a couple of hundred years in this grand experiment that we call democracy. Now, in a practical sense, what does that mean? It means the potential of a weapon of mass destruction and a terrorist, massive casualty-producing event somewhere in the western world— it may be in the United States of America — that causes our population to question our own Constitution and to begin to militarize our country in order to avoid a repeat of another mass-casualty-producing event [such as 9/11 or even a global crisis]. Which, in fact, then begins to potentially unravel the fabric of our Constitution.” [4]

The use of discretionary executive and presidential powers in the hands of the White House is slated to take place during a period of national crisis. The National Security Agency (NSA) eavesdropping controversy that arose after 2001 demonstrates some of the capabilities of the Bush Jr. Administration in regards to the use of executive powers under the pretext of war-time or emergency measures. At present, the American President has decided to exercise only a few of his emergency powers. Under the National Emergencies Act the White House has only utilized provisions relating to the military and U.S. national security. The White House can exploit extraordinary powers that suspend civil liberties and can even challenge the American Constitution. Because of the uncertain and the shifting shape of the “Global War on Terror” that is continually being redefined, a moment may arise when a “Constitutional Dictatorship” is declared to ensure the continuity of government. [5]

Moreover, the mechanisms have been put in place in the United States to allow for the hypothetical extension of the presidential term of George W. Bush Jr. or allow Vice-President Richard (Dick) B. Cheney to become U.S. president in the context of a war-time or emergency situation. This eventuality could occur should a major international war be launched in the Middle East— which is what a war against Iran and Syria would effectively create.

National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 51 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 20 would precisely justify such an action. A worldwide crisis of unpredictable consequences would occur if such a war were to be launched and Iran were to close the Straits of Hormuz. With the advent of a war against Syria and Iran, a volatile Pandora’s Box would be opened and there would be a complete breakdown of international relations and the existing global world order.

Media Disinformation on the “Iran Threat”

The Guardian, one of Britain’s most influence newspapers, has released a controversial article claiming that Iran has planned a secret summer offensive to drive U.S. troops out of Iraq for 2007. [6] There are fresh attempts underway to link Al-Qaeda to Tehran once again, similarly as the attempts to link Al-Qaeda to the late Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi government. The *Associated Press* also concurrently in step with *The Guardian* and other major information outlets released an account of Iranian plans to attack the European continent:

Iran is attempting to draw up plans to strike targets in Europe and has reconnoitered European nuclear power stations, a security analyst told a meeting at Britain's parliament.

Claude Moniquet, president of the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre, a private think-tank in Brussels, said his organisation also had evidence Tehran has increased the number of its intelligence agents across Europe.

"We have serious signals that something is under preparation in Europe," Moniquet said. "Iranian intelligence is working extremely hard to prepare its people and to prepare actions."

The centre, which he said deals directly with European intelligence agencies, believes Iranian operatives have carried out "reconnaissance of targets in European cities, including nuclear power stations," Moniquet said. He mentioned no other specific targets. [7]

While these reports, which portray Iran as the aggressor, are largely fabricated, Iran has nonetheless warned the U.S. several times that it will defend itself, that the Iranian Armed Forces are ready for war and that Iran has the required capabilities to confront the United States. [8] Tehran has stated that it is ready for air strikes or any invasion attempts and has warned of the grave consequences of these actions. [9] Warnings have repeatedly been issued to the U.S. and Israel since the fall of Baghdad in 2003. [10]

The crucial question: is the White House banking on this certainty of a long and drawn out bloody war that will consume the whole of the Middle East?

Pushing Syrian Troops out of Lebanon in 2005

"But I want to just caution, it is not incumbent on the United States to prove that Saddam Hussein [meaning Iraq] is trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction."

-Condoleezza Rice, while serving as U.S. National Security Advisor, during an interview with Wolf Blitzer (September 8, 2002)

After the fall of Iraq, only three Middle Eastern states remained that were outside of the orbit of the Anglo-American alliance and their partners. These countries were Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. Lebanon was the weakest of the three and under heavy Syrian influence.

Although Syria was hegemonic in Lebanon, it should be noted that the U.S., the E.U., and the Arab League gave Damascus the legitimacy to militarily control a substantial portion of Lebanon. After its withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, Syria has on several occasions categorically stated that it has no intention of returning to Lebanon. [11]

To clear the way for controlling Lebanon and Syria, the Franco-German entente in coordination with the Anglo-American alliance and Israel first helped pressure and push Syrian troops out of Lebanon and created a reason for informal NATO intervention in the Levant. This was successful achieving along with a pretext to berate and demonize Syria through the Valentines Day assassination of the late Rafik Hariri. With his death a pretext for interventionist action in both Lebanon and Syria was created.

The next phase(s) of the Anglo-American and Franco-German agenda in the Levant was the plan to fully transform and entrench Lebanon as a proxy territory and to do the same to Syria. This is what the Israeli attacks on Lebanon in 2006 sought to achieve. It is no coincidence that UNIFIL, the U.N. force in Lebanon, is under the authority of four NATO commanders. Diplomatic and economic pressure or regime change or ultimately military strikes (war) are all means of forcing the Syrians to succumb to the Anglo-American and Franco-German pressure.

The 2006 Israeli Campaign against Lebanon

"I want it to be very clear that the future of Lebanon is not an issue for negotiation [by the U.S. government] with anybody."

-Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State, during an interview with Agence France-Presse (December 11, 2006)

During the Israeli war against Lebanon in 2006, the U.S. government, along with Britain, deliberately obstructed and delayed a ceasefire for strategic reasons. The French and the German governments were also secretly involved and fully supportive. The U.S. and British governments wanted to buy time for Israel to crush the Lebanese Resistance and also to instigate Syria into the war. The former U.S. ambassador to the Headquarters of the U.N. in New York City, John Bolton has also verified that a U.N. ceasefire was deliberately being delayed by the U.S. and British governments;

Former ambassador to the UN John Bolton told the BBC that before any ceasefire Washington wanted Israel to eliminate Hezbollah's military capability.

(...)

Mr. Bolton said the US was deeply disappointed at Israel's failure to remove the threat from Hezbollah and the subsequent lack of any attempt to disarm its forces. [12]

What John Bolton fails to mention is that the U.S. government was upset because Israel refused to imperil itself for Anglo-American and Franco-German interests by attacking Syria and effectively going to war with both Syria and Iran. Iran made it perfectly clear that it would go to war with Israel should Israel dare attack Syria at the start of the Israeli campaign against Lebanon. [13]

During the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the Lebanese Resistance reported that the foreign embassies of countries such as Germany and France were performing surveys on the Lebanese refugees arriving to the outer suburbs of Beirut from South Lebanon. The questions asked were if the refugees from South Lebanon still supported the Lebanese Resistance or if not? Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah even put forward the accusation that European embassies in Beirut were passing information to the Israeli government to help the Israeli military in its military campaign.

These claims that certain European countries were spying for Israel has been further substantiated by reports from Lebanon in early-2007 that the Mossad, the secret service of Israel, has been working under the blanket of European intelligence agencies collecting information inside Lebanon. [14]

Secret War Plans against Lebanon and Syria Revealed and Unravelling

“...all the gates of Hell will open on the U.S. if it attempts to attack Syria.”

-Mohammed Naji Al-Otari, Prime Minister of Syria (October 12, 2005)

The Franco-German role in the Israeli aggression against Lebanon has also surfaced. Months after the war, it was reported that France, like the U.S., had urged Israel at the outset of the attack on Lebanon to also attack Syria. [15]

In this regard, there should be no mistake about the events in Lebanon and their purpose; they are part of an Anglo-American and Franco-German project. France, Germany, Britain, the U.S., and Israel are all working in unison in their diplomatic strategy in regards to Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. The U.S., France, and Britain are all pushing for the formation of a special U.N. committee to examine weapons smuggling on the border between Lebanon and Syria. [16]

The 2006 Israeli attacks were also pre-planned as numerous Israeli and international sources have reported based on the testimony of Israeli officials. *The Guardian* (U.K.) has essentially reported that the Israeli justification for their attack of Lebanon in 2006 was bogus;

Preparations for Israel's war in Lebanon last summer were drawn up at least four months before two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped by Hezbollah in July, Ehud Olmert, the prime minister, has admitted.

His submission to a commission of inquiry, leaked yesterday, contradicted the impression at the time that Israel was provoked into a battle for which it was ill-prepared. [17]

Haaretz, a major Israeli newspaper, has provided additional information on the calculated war plans against Lebanon:

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told the Winograd Commission that his decision to respond (...) with a broad military operation was made as early as March 2006, four months before last summer's [2006] Lebanon war broke out.

(...)

In his testimony, Olmert claimed he had held more meetings on the situation [meaning plans for military operations] in Lebanon than any of his recent predecessors. The first meeting was held on January 8, 2006, four days after Olmert was called to take the place of Ariel Sharon, who had fallen into a coma. Further meetings were held in March, April, May and July [2006; all before the Israeli attack on Lebanon]. [18]

Syrian Concerns about the Border with Lebanon

Syria's fate is unclear: even if the Syrians capitulate, the very existence of Syria as a country may be considered contrary to the interests of the Anglo-American alliance, the Franco-German entente, and Israel. Israel, with the directives of the White House and others, has been stating that it wants peace with Syria, but it is at the same time warning that Syria is preparing for a war with Israel.

At the end of the Israeli campaign in Lebanon in 2006, the Franco-German entente and NATO originally wanted to position their troops under a U.N. mandate, on the Lebanese border with Syria. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in the presence of Prime Minister Olmert of Israel stated that "the [military] force's mandate would need to include control of the crossing points from Syria to Lebanon." [19] This would be a logical

move for two reasons:

1) If Syria were arming Lebanon, there could be attempts to curb the flow of weapons from the borders.

2) If Syria were an eventual target for regime change or a possible military target, its borders could be penetrated and monitored and the Syrian capital, Damascus, eventually attacked. This at once was seen as a national security threat by the Syrians who strongly objected. Damascus and all of Syria's vital nerve centres are situated alongside the Lebanese border.

Later the leaders of the E.U. decided not to deploy on the Syrian-Lebanese border, which Syria warned was a major national security threat for Syria. [20] That decision not to deploy troops on the Syrian-Lebanese border, however, could eventually be reversed. [21]

It seems that the U.N., under Anglo-American and Franco-German pressure, is contemplating expanding the mandate of UNIFIL, which is dominated by the troops of NATO members and allies in Lebanon, to include positions on the Syrian border. [22] Any pledge to the Syrians about troops on their borders is likely to be broken, just as the NATO pledge to Russia that stipulated NATO would not expand eastwards in Europe to the Russian border was broken. The Syrian border, the Russian border, and Belarus are all similarly threatened by the presence and eastward push of NATO.

It should also be noted that the Syrians monitor the military activities of Israel and NATO on their western flank, NATO and Turkey on their northern borders, and the U.S. and Britain in Iraq on their eastern flank and can effectively perceive and sensibly discern any threats to their national security. In early-March of 2007 Syria once again gave warning that it felt that its borders were being threatened by foreign troops. Due to this, once again, Syrian officials threatened to close their borders with Lebanon, just as they did in 2006. [23]

At a joint press conference with the Belgian Foreign Minister, Karel de Gucht, the Syrian Foreign Minister when asked about the possibility of stationing foreign troops on the Syrian border with Lebanon jolted that this was part of a broader effort. The Syrian Foreign Minister said that it was "a sign that the West wants a state of war between the two [meaning Lebanon and Syria]." [24] The Syrians perceive that the events in Lebanon are being manipulated as a pretext towards escalating hostilities against Syria.

War preparations: Isolating Syria from Russia via the Sea

A new initiative has also been carried out which prepares the stage for cutting off the Russians from Syria. This new initiative which involves the E.U., the U.S., and NATO aims at controlling the Black Sea, the Rea Sea, and the Straits of Gibraltar. The only means of travel to Syria for Russia without having to cross non-ally territory is through the shipping or maritime route(s) of the Black Sea and/or the Mediterranean Sea.

The Syrians would be totally isolated if the maritime corridors were to be cut off between Russia and Syria and all borders with Syria closed. Syria is already encircled, as is Lebanon. A NATO armada floats off the Syrian coast in the Eastern Mediterranean, while Turkey, Anglo-American occupied Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordon, and Israel are all members and territories of NATO or NATO allies. Efforts are also underway to cut the land route between Iran and Syria via Turkey and Iraq.

The U.S. government in association with NATO has openly stated that it is considering the Black Sea as a potential transit route for weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), drugs, and terrorists. [25] This directly denotes Russia, and potentially the Ukraine should the Ukraine refuse to enter the orbit of NATO. Russia supplies weapons technology and arms to U.S. adversaries, including Syria and Iran. The cutting off of weapons supplies to Syria from Russia, by blocking the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea routes, is considered of strategic significance to the U.S. and its allies, particularly in view of an understanding reached between Damascus, Moscow, and Tehran. This understanding would allow Iran to purchase defensive weapons systems, shipped to Iran from Russia through Syria. [26]

The Mediterranean Front: Israel and Syria preparing for War

The Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. has been sounding the alarm in the United States. According to Israel, "Syria is developing into a very serious threat." [27] Israeli officials are publicly stating that they are preparing for a war with Syria and Lebanon. Ambassador Meridor made it clear that Israel had no "offensive intentions" toward Syria, while also stating that the Israeli government was working to make sure it would not be taken by surprise or unprepared if attacked by Syria. [28] Israeli officials have also told U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates that the Syrians are preparing for a military confrontation with Israel. [29]

The Israeli Chief of Staff, Daniel Halutz, estimated in November 2006 that there would be a war with Syria in the Summer of 2007. [30] Several Russian analysts have also warned that there could be a war in the Levant between Syria and Israel that could spillover into the rest of the Middle East. Indeed, in Israel there is much talk about a "sizeable" war in the Middle East that will consume the Palestinian Territories, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. The leadership of Iran and Syria are prepared for the possibility of such a war too, and warning against it. In the wider Arab World, there is also much talk and whispers about a major war—a "great war." There are also reports and growing fears in the Caucasus, Cyprus, Greece,

Turkey, Pakistan, and Central Asia on the possibility of a war in the Middle East.

The Approaching Confrontation with Iran

A war with Iran would spill over into all the surrounding countries. The chaos thereby created would have repercussions from Europe to India and China. Four regions would almost instantly be affected by the ramifications of a military strike against Iran: the Middle East, the Caucasus (Caucasia), Central Asia, and the Indian sub-continent.

“We see a deteriorating situation, a move toward confrontation,” the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Chief has stated in relation to Iran’s Nuclear Energy Program. [31] ABC News has also reported (May 26, 2007) that the White House has given presidential approval for a covert operation against Iran aimed at destabilizing Iran and implementing regime change. [32] This report was released a few days after Iranian security forces exposed American spy networks inside Iran.

Iran has consistently been saying that the U.S. and Britain have been using Iraq as a base to destabilize and infiltrate Iran. The Swiss Ambassador in Tehran, who represents American interests, was requested to transmit a message to the U.S. government in this regard. [33]

Israel seeks a 2007 Rematch in Lebanon: Middle Eastern Powder Keg?

Hezbollah and the Lebanese Resistance have declared that they are ready to defend Lebanon from any Israeli military offensive.

Iranian officials and military commanders have also cautioned that the Israeli government is planning another aerial and ground campaign against Lebanon. [34] “According to our information, they [the Israeli forces] intend to invade Lebanon this summer [2007] to make up for their last year defeat [in 2006], and I warn other nations and this regime to be vigilant and to understand that [2007] is not going to be similar to [2006],” the Iranian President was quoted as saying, while visiting Kashan, by several Iranian news sources. [35] This can be an indication of Iranian preparations for a war that will extend beyond the borders of Lebanon and include Iran and Syria.

Israeli troops and tanks have also been performing large-scale, nationwide military exercises and war games. [36] **It is worth noting, in this regard, that this was also the case in 2006;** Israeli reserve units had mobilized weeks before Israeli troops were captured in Lebanon and a pretext was created for the Israeli military to initiate its attack on Lebanon. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, the military campaign on July 12, 2006 was preceded by military preparations: “weeks ago [prior to July 12, 2007], an entire

[Israeli] reserve division was drafted in order to train for an operation such as the [current and real] one [in Lebanon]." [37] This report confirms that the Israeli government was getting ready for a large-scale operation against Lebanon. It is not by chance that the training operations coincidentally turned into a real-life scenario.

Reuters has also reported from Lebanon that Hezbollah seems ready should a major regional war breakout;

"What the group took six years to achieve (after Israeli troops left Lebanon in 2000), it has achieved in six months," one political source said of Hezbollah's military buildup.

(...)

Hezbollah has also established a new defense line, with trenches, bunkers and rocket bases just north of the Litani and in the southern part of the Bekaa Valley to the east, the sources said.

They said the group has sent hundreds of fighters, both new recruits and veterans, for training in Iran — more than making up for its war casualties, including 270 or so dead.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has openly stated that military preparations are under way, couching them as precautions rather than as a prelude to attack.

(...)

Analysts in Lebanon and Israel said Hezbollah was in no mood to go into battle again—unless any U.S. or Israeli assault on Iran's nuclear installations set off a regional conflict.

(...)

"Hezbollah is not looking for a new war," retired Israeli intelligence analyst Matti Steinberg said. "It is aiming to reshape the character of the Lebanese state. It is not looking southward to the border, but inward to Beirut."

While Hezbollah devotes part of its energies to the Lebanese power struggle, its alliances with Iran and Syria link it to broader conflicts that could lead to a military flare-up.

"What troubles me is that perhaps the Americans will attack Iran," Aharon Zeevi-Farkah, a former chief of Israel's military intelligence, told the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronot*. "That would thrust [Israel] into a war and the home front [in Israel] is not ready [as of March 4, 2007]."

Some Israeli analysts say another conflict is inevitable. [38]

Beating the War Drums: A Summer Offensive against Syria and Iran?

The Iranian Armed Forces Central Joint-Command, which pairs the Iranian Regular Armed Forces and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, believes that the Israelis are preparing for a summer offensive in 2007. The latter would be directed against the Palestinians and Lebanon, resulting in the eruption of a possible major regional war involving Syria and Iran. The *Los Angeles Times* has reported that the Iranians expect a major Summer Israeli-U.S. offensive which would be triggered from the Palestinians Territories. [39] A special report written in early-April of 2007 by the *Los Angeles Times* describes the anticipation of a coming Middle Eastern war in the horizon:

“One scenario is that their intrusion was a prelude for a large-scale assault,” he [Ahmad Bakhshayesh, a professor of political science at Tehran’s Allameh Tabatabai University] said.

This week, Maj. Gen. Hassan Firoozabadi, Iranian armed forces chief of staff, predicted that the U.S. and Israel would launch a massive attack on the [Middle East] this summer.

“International Zionism and the Palestine-usurping Israel with the support of the reactionary neoconservatives of the U.S. are preparing a new plan,” he said, according to Iranian news agencies. [40]

At the official level, Israel has also ratcheted down the implausible rhetoric that Syria is preparing for a near-term offensive against Israel to the more plausible account that Syria is initiating the mobilization of its defensive forces. This includes the purchase of weapons systems from Iran and Russia, and also the manufacturing of rockets and missile with the help of Iran and Russia. Russian anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles are also being delivered to Syria. The U.S. has also imposed further sanction on the Syrian military. [41]

The consequences and results of any strikes against Syria would be far-reaching and would destabilize the whole of the Middle East from Turkey to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Iran would also intervene on the side of its Syrian allies.

War in the Middle East: The Palestinian Front

A war against Syria would have disastrous ramifications for Anglo-American occupied Iraq and would spill over into Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The *Associated Press* reported that Ahmed Jibril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), a group with strong links to Syria, like other Palestinian leaders said that his forces would fight against Israel and the U.S. should they attack Syria or Iran;

“We will not allow any aggression against Syria or the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Ahmed Jibril told a rally of about 1,000 supporters in a Palestinian refugee camp in the Syrian capital.

"I say it frankly, we will not only be on their side, we will be in the forefront," said Jibril. [42]

Hamas has also made similar statements saying that the Palestinians, Syria, and Iran are part of a united front and that any war launched against either Syria or Iran will generate a battle front in Palestine against Israeli forces. Khaled Meshaal, the political leader-in-exile of Hamas pledged his support to Iran and Syria in December of 2005:

"We are part of a united [resistance] front, and if one member [e.g. Syria, Iran] of this [resistance] front is attacked it is our duty to support them." [43]

Iranian ballistic missiles will leave Israeli forces exposed. The leaders of the different Palestinian fractions and groups are well aware of this. The Palestinian leaders know in the possible scenario of a war against Iran and Syria, that Israel would be placed at a disadvantage inside the Palestinian Territories and that the battlefield would be "almost even" between Israeli troops and Palestinian fighters.

If Syria were attacked there would be violence in Jordan and possibly civil war. The bulk of the population in Jordan is either Palestinian or the descendents of Palestinian refugees. Many in Jordan also oppose the authoritarian rule of the Hashemite Dynasty and the support that King Abdullah II gives the U.S. and Israel, which is directed against Palestine and Iraq.

War in the Middle East: The Iraqi Front

"The U.S. military presence [in Iraq and Afghanistan] will not become an element of strength [as the Pentagon thinks] at our expense. The opposite is true, because their forces would turn into [our] hostages [in the event of any attacks against Iran]."

-Rear-Admiral Ali Shamkhani (August 18, 2004)

If war were to be waged against Iran and Syria, there would be casualties in the tens of thousands in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Iraq would become a graveyard for American and British forces. American and British troops would be overwhelmed by waves of well armed and well trained Iranian troops from the East and Syrian troops from the West and an Iraqi Resistance that would undoubtedly grow in numbers and strengthen ten fold with the arrival of Iranian and Syrian military forces.

Iraqi cleric and leader, Moqtada Al-Sadr, a major opponent of the U.S. and Britain in Iraq, has also pledged to stand by Syria and Iran in a united front against Israel, the U.S., and Britain. While in Tehran, the young Shiite Muslim cleric said in the presence of Dr. Ali Larijani, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Security Council of Iran, that his forces would battle on the side of Iran if Iran were to be attacked. *The Washington Post* carried the story about Moqtada Al-Sadr's visit to Tehran and concluded that Anglo-American occupied Iraq was destined to eventually become a battleground between U.S. and Iranian forces:

An Iraqi Muslim cleric who leads a major Shiite militia pledged to come to the defense of neighboring Iran if it were attacked, aides to the cleric, Moqtada Sadr, said Monday [January 23, 2006].

The commitment, made Sunday [January 22, 2006] in Tehran during a visit by Sadr, came in response to a senior Iranian official's query about what the [Iraqi] cleric would do in the event of an attack on Iran. It marked the first open indication that [Iran] is preparing for a military response if attacked in a showdown with the [U.S. and its allies] (...) The pledge was also one of the strongest signs yet that Iraq could become a battleground in any Western conflict with Iran, raising the specter of Iraqi Shiite militias — or perhaps even the U.S.-trained Shiite-dominated military — taking on American troops here in sympathy with Iran.

(...)

Ali Yasiri, the head of Sadr's political office in Baghdad, said the request to Sadr came from the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani.

"They [the Iranian officials] asked [Moqtada Al-Sadr] a question: 'What would be the Mahdi Army's role if any neighboring country were attacked?'" Yasiri said. "And Moqtada Sadr said, 'If any Arab country, or neighboring country, were attacked [by the U.S. and its allies], Iraq will help [them against the attackers].' [44]

While in Damascus, Moqtada Al-Sadr made similar pledges after discussions regarding the American-led war agenda with the Syrian President. *The Daily Star*, a Lebanese newspaper, reported in February 2006 that Moqtada Al-Sadr's forces in Iraq would fight alongside the Syrians and the Iranians:

Firebrand Iraqi Shiite [Muslim] cleric Moqtada al-Sadr vowed to help defend Syria and Iran after a meeting in Damascus with President Bashar Assad. "I am at the service of Syria and Iran. I will defend all Muslim countries with all means," he told reporters.

(...)

Sadr accused "Israel, the United States and Britain, which are enemies of Iraq and Syria, of sowing dissent between the Syrian and Iraqi peoples."

(...)

[The Syrian President] called on Iraqis to “close ranks in order to save Iraq and liberate their country from [foreign] occupation.”

Sadr, who arrived on Sunday and also met with the [Syrian] foreign minister, paid tribute to Syria’s “support for the Iraqi people” and vowed to “maintain coordination” with Damascus . [45]

Diplomacy and War Preparations are Simultaneous in the Middle East

“You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war.” (Albert Einstein)

A two-pronged approach is being taken in regards to both Syria and Iran. Diplomacy and economics are being applied to implement a surrender, while military preparations are fully underway, on course, undeterred, and strengthened by economic sanctions. These military preparations will be activated if surrender is not insured through diplomatic pressure and manipulation.

Détente may seem like a prospect in the Middle East as the U.S. has started talks with Iran and Syria, but then again it may only be the “calm before the storm.”

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Notes

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