

The Iran-Qaeda Scandal

Cheney's Covert Plan

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The Taliban's attempted assassination of US Vice President Dick Cheney earlier this week in Afghanistan highlighted a supreme irony. Immediately after hearing what he described as a, "loud boom," Cheney was swiftly whisked into a bomb shelter in a replay of his movements on 9/11.

Two days before the suicide attack (allegedly by the Taliban) – that claimed the lives of 23 people at the Bagram Air Base and targeted Vice President Cheney – a scandal of monumental proportions had just surfaced in America.

The New Yorker's ace investigative reporter, Seymour Hersh, had done it again with his latest earth-shattering exposé. Hersh revealed Dick Cheney and his henchmen had deliberately set about inciting chain reactions of sectarian violence and civil wars across the Middle East via a massive covert operation disguised as a shift of geopolitical strategy. It was therefore entirely appropriate that the earth itself opened up in Bagram and came close to swallowing up the main perpetrator of this seemingly unstoppable nightmare – namely US

Vice President Dick Cheney. Now, instead of launching a war against Iran, Cheney with Bush's complicity, have pulled the trigger on a covert war of global proportions pitting Sunnis against Shias.



(Twenty-three people died in the suicide blast that targeted US Vice President Cheney.)

According to Hersh, Cheney's covert plan involves massive US financial backing for militant Sunni groups that are known to be inimical to the Shia militias of the Badr Brigades, the Mahdi Army, Hamas and Hezbollah all of whom support the revolutionary government of Iran. The US-backed Sunnis include the Muslim Brotherhood, a vast and powerful multinational organization, who are definitely on friendly terms with Al-Qaeda and its allies, including the Taliban. The government of Saudi Arabia is Sunni, although they are deeply despised by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda because of their subservience to their masters in big oil and George Bush's America.

The Israeli right and a rogue faction of the royal family of Saud who are loyal to Prince Bandar bin Sultan are backing Cheney's covert plan. The ultimate objective of Cheney's redirection of US strategy in the region is to redraw the national boundaries of the Middle East and to give an explosive multiple birth to a sprawling litter of new cantons, colonies, domains, enclaves, protectorates, statelets and territories all pledged to American and Israeli dominance of the region and its precious oil, gas and energy reserves.

For starters, Lebanon is to be dismembered so as to form a chain of new semi-autonomous and religiously segregated cantons: one Sunni, one Christian, one Alawi and one Shia. Iraq will suffer the worst and most disfiguring surgery. Baghdad will become a City State and poised perilously on the border between the new Arabic Sunni and Arabic Shia states. The southern borders of the Arabic Shia State will straddle Kuwait and extend down south to include the oil-fields of southern Iran on the east and an oil-rich strip of Saudi Arabia on the west. A new state of Free Kurdistan will be separated from the Sunni and Shia enclaves of Iraq. A Greater Jordan will be carved out of Saudi Arabia to provide more space for the relocation of Palestinians, and a Free Baluchistan that will include Helmand province and Kandahar will be severed from Afghanistan. Perhaps, most controversially, an Islamic Sacred State that will include the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the Hejaz will be surgically separated from the rest of Saudi Arabia.



Coincidentally, at the same time that Cheney is fomenting religious conflicts and civil wars between the Sunnis and the Shias, the US-backed government in Iraq is poised to hand over control of Iraqi oil production to the western oil companies. In this plan, the government of Iraq will retain their ownership of the oil reserves, but they are irrevocably awarding the right to extract the oil reserves exclusively to big oil. Given this sequence of events, Dick Cheney might argue for the Jungian principle of synchronicity – an unexplainable consequence of simultaneity sometimes as pleasant as serendipity but sometimes as painful as catastrophe – but few would believe him. Cheney might implore, “Why not redistribute the oil wealth of Iraq to big oil at the same time the US shifts its strategy to trigger a wave of religious confrontations designed to dismember, dissect and carve up the entire region while masking the expropriation of the Iraqi people’s oil rights?” The reply could be, “Because this crude tactic is blatantly immoral, unethical and illegal.” But, those trivialities have never stopped Cheney before, nor are they likely to stop him now.

As America’s most celebrated investigative reporter, Seymour Hersh’s list of explosive revelations has included:

- the My Lai Massacre;
- provocative US intelligence operations that triggered the Soviet attack on KAL Flight 007;
- Robert Maxwell’s complicity in the arrest of Israeli whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu and
- a growing series of exposés spinning out of the Iraq War and the planning for the Iran War.

While Hersh’s record of exposing major scandals is firmly established, nothing that he has ever reported to date approaches the enormity of his latest investigation. In his paper titled simply, *The Redirection*, Hersh reveals presidential involvement in the massive covert

operation to ignite a religious war in the Middle East as a prelude to the forcible reconfiguration of the region into a new patchwork quilt of pliable and supplicant theocratic cantons designed to enshrine the security of Israel and the over-arching supremacy of US oil interests.

For his part, Hersh urges Congress to perform its constitutional duty to oversee the massive expenditures for the covert operations that he traces to untold billions in raw currency in US dollars that were conveniently stockpiled in Iraq where they were earmarked for "reconstruction." However, instead of rebuilding the cities and infrastructure of Iraq, the mega-billions in US cash are now being subverted to the bank accounts of radical Sunni groups known to be in league with Al Qaeda and their patrons – the Taliban.

Hersh quotes well-known regional authorities who are confidently predicting a US and Israel-backed confrontation between Shia and Sunni forces. The covert American-Israeli plan to expand the Iraq Civil War to engulf the entire region in a blazing arc of atrocities and ultra-violence that will extend from Lebanon to Afghanistan is the brainchild of the neoconservative cell remaining in power in the Bush White House:

- Vice President Dick Cheney;
- National Security Advisor Elliot Abrams;
- Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and their co-conspirator from Saudi Arabia,
- Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, the former Saudi Ambassador to Washington who now finds himself at odds with other factions of the royal family of Saud.



As the undeniable head of the severely weakened neoconservative rump left dangling after the sackings of Donald Rumsfeld and John Bolton, it is no secret that Dick Cheney is being isolated. Cheney's political isolation has forced him to take matters into his own hands, and he has shamelessly invaded the turf of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in recent months. Uncharacteristically, Cheney was flushed out in December when he met with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, apparently to forge the tentative alliance for the redirection of US policy to channel massive covert funding to Sunni militants. Last week, Cheney visited Pakistan ostensibly to castigate President Pervez Musharraf and to insist on more assertive direct action against the Taliban. After the bomb ripped through Bagram, Cheney – who is usually optimistic and chipper – appeared to be chastened, silent, even morose. Two days later, Musharraf announced the arrest of a leading Taliban figure, and sectarian violence broke out near the border between Pakistan and Iran. In the western media, the press is filled with stories describing Cheney's fall from grace and his duel with Rice over the presidential power to dictate foreign policy.

Another peculiar aspect of the case involves Dick Cheney's elder daughter, Elizabeth Cheney, the mother of five. The Vice President arranged for Elizabeth Cheney to be appointed to the office of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs in the State Department. In her official capacity, Elizabeth Cheney also headed a shadowy operation called the Iran-Syrian Operations Group (ISOG) that was empowered to allocate funds totalling circa \$80 million per year to dissident groups in Iran. In recent months, the Bush White House has issued a series of complaints about Iran arming terrorists in Iraq with explosive devices that have been traced to the Iranian military. At this time, Congress does not know whether any of the funding directed by Cheney's elder daughter was subverted to arm terrorists – or not. This weekend, armed conflict in the border area

between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan has been traced to Sunni terrorists in Iran who are funded by America. Coming as it does promptly after Cheney's visit to the region and his shake-up of Pakistani intelligence officials, this troubling aspect of the current policy redirection detailed by Hersh should surely become the subject of Congressional scrutiny.



(Elizabeth Cheney paid \$80 million per year to Iranian dissidents.)

In the finale to his latest article, Hersh implores Senator Jay Rockefeller and Senator Ron Wyden of the Intelligence Committee to hold public hearings to probe, to expose and to investigate as promptly and thoroughly as possible what should now be termed: The Iran-Qaeda Scandal.

The 110th Congress promised great accomplishments. In their first 100 hours, they did pass some impressive legislation. However, due to the political dynamics – and the weakened makeup of the Senate, there is actually little room for the Democrats' razor thin majority to manoeuvre against a presidential veto. Impeachment, that requires 67 votes for conviction in the Senate, is – at this time – out of the question. However, that situation could change if a new strategic course were adopted – one that would challenge the legality of Cheney's covert redirection of US policy into a grand scheme to ignite a religious war of global proportions.

It is crystal clear, thanks to Hersh, that Congress should launch an investigation next week into Cheney's costly and dangerous covert war. It would be surprising if in the course of this investigation that the Senate did not discover incriminating evidence against the Vice President linking him to the:

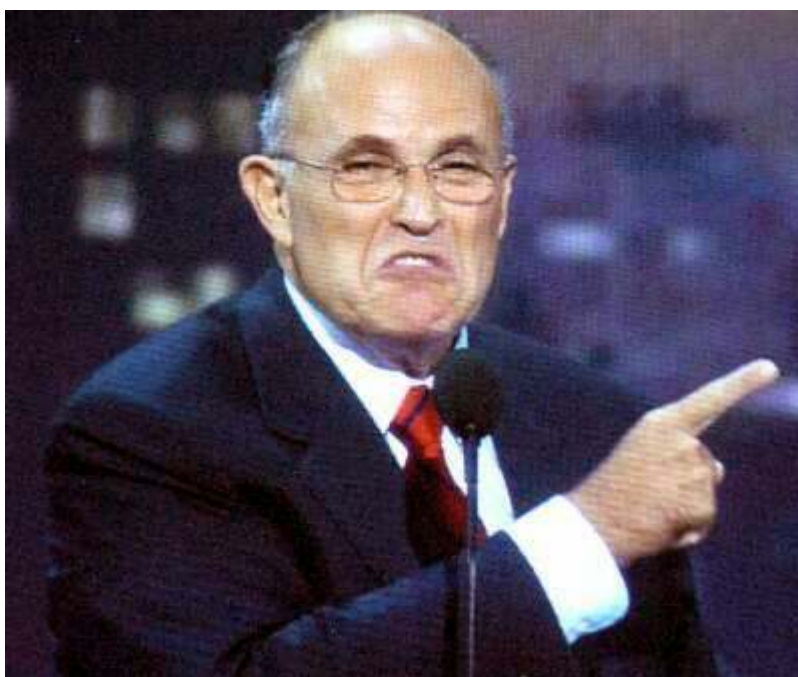
- abuses of presidential power;
- obstruction of justice;
- misappropriation of federal funds and
- violations of US and international law against the incitement of war, conflict and acts of terrorism.

Already more unpopular than his deeply unpopular president, Cheney should actually be the strongest, fittest and most worthy candidate for impeachment in the crosshairs of the Senate snipers. Dr Steven Jonas has been advocating that Congress ought to target Cheney for impeachment rather than Bush – and Hersh has now provided the ammunition for what appears to be an airtight case for high crimes and misdemeanours against the risk-loving Vice President. Now that he is seen to be a far greater political liability to the Republican administration, members of his own party will begin to move against Cheney.

If Cheney were to be impeached and removed from his office, the way would be cleared for Bush to nominate his successor. This tactic would give the fibrillating Republican ticket a much-needed syringe of adrenaline. At this point, Cheney is without any shadow of doubt the biggest liability for any potential Republican presidential nominee. Bush is seen as a broken alcoholic bungler who thinks he talks to god, while Cheney is now seen as an increasingly dangerous and violence-prone lunatic. If Cheney were to go, Bush would be able to shift the focus of criticism away from himself as well as turn his vast political powers to the selection of his nominee for the grandest appointment any president can make: a

Vice-President worthy of succeeding him.

The current Republican presidential hopefuls present a rich field for Bush to consider as Cheney's replacement. John McCain would instantly become the lightning rod for all criticism of Bush's handling of the war. Rudolf Giuliani would vividly recall the defining moment of the Bush presidency - 9/11 when Bush's popularity topped ninety per cent. Mitt Romney would invigorate the grassroots and the evangelicals while providing a fresh face and a relatively clean slate - the closest thing to a new beginning Bush is likely to get. Condoleezza Rice could be a much-needed form of political insurance against both of the leading Democratic contenders: Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. The impeachment of Dick Cheney for wrecking US foreign policy with his covert war pitting the Sunnis against the Shias could be seen as the potential salvation of the Republican Party, an organization that increasingly sees itself as inescapably doomed to decades of dark and divisive political oblivion.



(Rudolf Giuliani currently leads the Republican field for the presidential nomination.)

The Senate investigation of Iran-Qaeda should, once again, subpoena the documents of the Vice President's secret briefings on energy policy that have been classified since early 2001. Continued reticence to cooperate with a Senatorial investigation into the legality of covert operations to precipitate a global religious war between the Sunnis and the Shias - with the Bush-Cheney White House arming, backing and financing the Sunnis - would be untenable in today's political climate.

If the White House were to be uncooperative and refused to respond to a subpoena for the background documents, the Senate should subpoena the Vice President, Ambassador Khalilzad, Prince Bandar bin Sultan and Elliot Abrams. Then, these witnesses should be invited to testify in public about their covert operations to launch a massive bloodbath to protect the financial interests of the big oil companies. That's the American way.



(Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad surrounded by security personnel.)

While there is actually a myriad of potentially incriminating investigations into Bush Era

shenanigans, none offer the rich target field presented by the Iran-Qaeda scandal. The back-story is riveting.

The United States has a very chequered post-war history with Iran. In 1953, the CIA orchestrated a coup to overthrow the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh after he announced his plan to nationalize the oil reserves of Iran.

The US supported the predatory autocracy of Shah Reza Pahlavi, and the CIA trained his infamous intelligence organization, the Savak. The cruelty and excess of the Shah's reign paved the way for the Iranian Revolution in the 1970s. Revolutionaries held 53 American bureaucrats hostage for more than one year, a crisis that triggered the downfall of the progressive presidency of Jimmy Carter.

Covert meetings designed to undermine Carter's campaign for re-election between former CIA agents supporting the Reagan-Bush ticket and their Iranian counterparts only became public knowledge in the aftermath of the Reagan presidency. The elder brother of George H. W. Bush, Prescott Bush supervised these covert negotiations that led to the retention of the US hostages to cripple Carter's campaign in 1980.

The senior Bush was aided by William Casey, who became one of the most controversial Directors of Central Intelligence in American history through his involvement in the Iran-Contra Scandal that occurred during the second term of the Reagan-Bush government. Some see the October Surprise as the act of conception of the Iran-Contra scandal.

This treasonous scandal has never received a balanced investigation by Congress, but the incriminating facts were made known by a fearless American academic, Gary Sick, who detailed the conspiracy in his authoritative book, *The October Surprise*. Swiftly attacked by Daniel Pipes, Bush-loyalist and neocon ideologue *extraordinaire*, Sick became the target of the usual suspects who arranged a Congressional whitewash during the reign of Bush the First to prepare the groundwork for his re-election in 1992. But, the American people did not buy it. In 1992, Bill Clinton defeated Bush who had become an object of derision for his political abuse of the military and intelligence communities and his unpopular economic and foreign policies. The case of former intelligence officials actively collaborating with agents of a foreign power inimical to America to rig a US presidential election is a lingering disgrace that prefigured the continuous confrontation between the US and Iran that continues to the present day.



(Daniel Pipes blames the failure of the US war in Iraq on the ingratitude of the Iraqi people.)

During the Hostage Crisis, the US urged Saddam Hussein to attack Iran to bring about regime change in Tehran. Boasting that he would be in Tehran in days, Saddam led the west's proxy war against the Iranian Revolution. The war did not go as Saddam and his backers had hoped. The conflict stagnated into a war of attrition. The US policy of ostensibly favouring Saddam led to the infamous handshake between Donald Rumsfeld and Saddam Hussein, as well as the arming of the Iraqi Republican Guard with sophisticated weaponry including high grades of weaponized Anthrax.

In the course of the war, President Reagan and members of his government ordered Colonel Oliver North to supervise a covert plan to arm Iran – fulfilling the pledge made during the October Surprise negotiations. The plan was insidious for the Iran-Contra conspirators

arranged to funnel the money raised by the sale of arms to Tehran to fund the Contras, a thinly disguised cadre of death squads running amok in Nicaragua and other parts of Central America.



(Ronald Reagan said, "Facts are stupid things.")

One year after the bitter Iran-Iraq War drew to its close in 1988, Saddam asked the US for permission to annex Kuwait. Bush the First was president, and his ambassador to Baghdad, April Glaspie, met with Saddam and deliberately failed to deny his request for permission to invade Kuwait. James A. Baker was Bush's Secretary of State at the time, and Ambassador Glaspie specifically cited him as the source for the American position of neutrality vis a vis Saddam's annexation of Kuwait.

Here is a verbatim transcript of April Glaspie's official granting Saddam permission to invade Kuwait:

"We have no opinion on your Arab - Arab conflicts, such as your dispute with Kuwait. Secretary (of State James) Baker has directed me to emphasize the instruction, first given to Iraq in the 1960's, that the Kuwait issue is not associated with America."



(Ambassador Glaspie shakes hands with Saddam Hussein.)

Upon hearing this statement, Saddam Hussein smiled, and the meeting was closed as the fate of Kuwait was sealed.

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Bush, Sr. and Baker felt the sting of political backlash and swiftly reversed their position. The Persian Gulf War ensued, and Saddam was put back into

his box and kept there until the invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

The events leading up to the confrontation between the Bush-Cheney White House and Iran have been revealed in Hersh's three papers: *The Next Wars*; *The Iran Plans* and *The Redirection*. Taken collectively, these publications now expose the deeply unpopular Vice President to impeachment in the US Congress.

The Iran-Qaeda crisis is a far more serious threat to the national security of the United States than the Watergate break-in. Iran-Qaeda is much more sinister than the Iran-Contra conspiracy. Iran-Qaeda is far more foolish than either of those historic scandals by an extremely wide margin.

Scandals in American history define their eras. The excessive bribery and corruption of Tea Pot Dome heralded the Wall Street Crash and the end of *laissez faire* capitalism. The Watergate crisis signalled the need for closer Congressional scrutiny of the operations of the White House and the dangerous accumulation of extraordinary powers in the presidency. The Iran-Contra Scandal illustrated the prescience of Eisenhower's prophecy of caution, to beware the influence, whether sought or unsought, of the military industrial complex. The emerging Iran-Qaeda scandal encompasses the lessons of all three major American twentieth century scandals:

- unprecedented levels of official corruption;
- dangerous levels of unilateralist and covert presidential power and
- the excessive abuses of power by the military-industrial lobby and their useful idiots in the Bush-Cheney White House and their reliable allies in pliant nations from Israel to Saudi Arabia.

The world is already outraged at the war-torn Bush-Cheney presidency, but when the facts of Cheney's reckless and piratical hijacking of foreign policy become generally available to the mainstream the domestic reaction against the latest American scandal will be absolutely volcanic.

America's first president, George Washington, cautioned the young nation against becoming involved in foreign entanglements.

"Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?"

While America did become involved in two world wars, but both were raging before America became engaged. Cheney's redirection of America's strategy contradicts Washington's dictum by inciting foreign wars and campaigns of terror against America and its allies – a flagrant violation of America's original military and diplomatic traditions.

Thomas Jefferson stated, "We see the wisdom of Solon's remark, that no more good must be attempted than the nation can bear." Cheney's reckless escalation of covert operations in the Middle East is proof that he is the antithesis of Solon and Jefferson.

One of America's greatest presidents, John Quincy Adams, warned that America must not seek out monsters to destroy lest she would become "dictatress of the world."

The spirits of departed American presidents are hovering over the monuments and buildings of Washington gathering for a perfect storm of constitutional ultra-violence and the ensuing battle for the hearts and minds of America over the nemesis of Iran-Qaeda.

Quotations from Seymour Hersh's, *The Redirection*

"The key players behind the redirection are Vice-President Dick Cheney, the deputy national-security adviser Elliott Abrams, the departing Ambassador to Iraq (and nominee for United Nations Ambassador), Zalmay Khalilzad, and Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi national-security adviser. While Rice has been deeply involved in shaping the public policy, former and current officials said that the clandestine side has been guided by Cheney."

"(Walid) Jumblatt then told me that he had met with Vice-President Cheney in Washington last fall to discuss, among other issues, the possibility of undermining Assad. He and his colleagues advised Cheney that, if the United States does try to move against Syria, members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood would be 'the ones to talk to,' Jumblatt said."

"Jumblatt said, 'We told Cheney that the basic link between Iran and Lebanon is Syria—and to weaken Iran you need to open the door to effective Syrian opposition.'"

"Jumblatt said he understood that the issue was a sensitive one for the White House. 'I told Cheney that some people in the Arab world, mainly the Egyptians' —whose moderate Sunni leadership has been fighting the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for decades—'won't like it if the United States helps the Brotherhood. But if you don't take on Syria we will be face to face in Lebanon with Hezbollah in a long fight, and one we might not win.'"



(Seymour Hersh)

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