

Welcome to the Summer of Hate

"elements in the US administration are mulling an attack on Iran"

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Forty years ago, the world seemed to be singing in tune. On June 1, 1967, in London, The Beatles released their eighth and arguably most influential album, *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. It marked the beginning of the Summer of Love – which, apart from Jimi Hendrix mesmerizing flower-power children in Monterey, California, also had room for the escalation of the Vietnam War and Israel's lightning victory in the Six-Day War.

Today, we have the sublime Patti Smith singing covers of Hendrix and The Beatles, Iraq instead of Vietnam, and Israel – along with elements in the administration of US President George W Bush – mulling an attack on Iran. Call it the summer of hate.

There was a huge elephant in that Baghdad room where ambassadors from the United States and Iran smashed a 27-year-old iceberg and met this week – and the name of the elephant is Israel. Manouchehr Mottaki, the Iranian foreign minister, expressed hope, on the record, that talks would continue in case the Bush administration admitted its Middle East policy had “failed”.

The conservative Iranian paper Jam e Jam – popular among young Iranians – stressed in an editorial that now “it is not possible anymore to oppose our country ... The United States cannot do without Iran, which is the new power in the Middle East.”

Over 66-year-old, four-heart-operations Dick Cheney's body, of course. And what about all those expenses – the Stennis and Nimitz floating armadas now “exercising” in the Persian Gulf, the relentless Central Intelligence Agency black ops in Khuzestan and Balochistan to “destabilize” the Iranian government, and reports of the US attempting industrial sabotage of Iran's nuclear program?

Bomb Iran ...

A leading French geostrategist has just returned from a stint in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, visiting the industrial-military establishment and all the top Israeli think-tanks. He stresses three main points.

1. For the Israeli establishment, invading Iraq and deposing the already ineffective Saddam Hussein system was a very bad move (although they didn't think so in 2002).
2. Attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 was a very bad move. “We should have done it, but with at least two divisions, to smash them completely,” said a retired

general.

3. Now there is an unshakable consensus that the real inevitable move will be to attack Iran's nuclear installations – preferably showering cruise missiles over the Natanz plant. Whatever spinning rolls on, attacking Iran remains the key tenet of the Ziocon (Zionists + neo-conservatives) policy.

While the Ziocons itch for another war, Iraq bleeds. From 20 to 50 bodies are found in the streets of Baghdad every day. They don't even register in the news cycle anymore. The Sadrists – who rule the Shi'ite street – know that the overwhelming death squads in Baghdad are from the Badr Organization, straight from the US-friendly, Supreme Islamic Council in Iraq-controlled seventh floor of the Interior Ministry.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon keeps invading Sadr City, calling air strikes on houses and back streets, killing civilians and arresting Mahdi Army "terrorist" commanders in "secret cells" who allegedly smuggle explosive formed penetrators from Iran (no credible evidence is produced).

Washington nemesis Muqtada al-Sadr, wearing a white shroud over his black cloak, is spectacularly back, live from Kufa, straight out of his carefully protected Najaf (not Iran) seclusion. His nationalist, Islamic, non-sectarian message embodies the Iraqi street: "I renew my demand for the occupiers to leave or draw up a timetable for withdrawal, and I ask the government not to let the occupiers extend the occupation even for one day."

Obviously, no one paid attention in that Baghdad summit room. Especially Washington, for whom Muqtada's nationalist, trans-sectarian, let's-work-with-our-Sunni-brothers appeal is the sandstorm that renders the occupation blind.

Rock 'n' Roll

Former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami, currently the director of the International Institute for the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations, recently visited Italy. He defended religion as a way of liberation from oppression, and stressed that the solution for the current crisis is "an acceptance by the international community of our role". The reformist impulse won't die in Iran: "We've been trying to reform our country for 100 years now. Our future will be better if we disarm the violent."

Iran at the same time is deeply "reforming" Iraq – whatever the rhetoric coming from the White House. Iranian cultural influence on Iraqi youth is overwhelming – via the financing of at least a cultural center or a library in every village. The foremost foreign language is now Farsi, not English. Girls are exchanging the Arab *hijab* for the less constraining Iranian *chador*. Iraq's schoolbooks are now manufactured by Iranian printing presses. Most of Iraq's oil, gas and electricity is now provided by Iran.

But there's no stopping the summer of hate – and not only because of the torrid 50-degree-Celsius temperatures. Iran will keep being linked by the Ziocons to al-Qaeda. Iraq will remain the true heart of darkness. Forty years after the Six-Day War, the State of Israel will continue to smash Palestine to bits, especially Gaza. Saudi funds – channeled via billionaire Saad Hariri – and heavy US military support to the army of the pitiful Fouad Siniora government in Lebanon will be busy spreading divide-and-rule, pitting Salafi-jihadis against, supposedly, Hezbollah, but victimizing helpless Palestinian civilian refugees instead. The

Ziocon plan is to provoke a civil war in Lebanon, in which Hezbollah would be inevitably convulsed, and profit from the opening to attack Iran.

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