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Did Bibi Box Obama In?

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On Sept. 20, 2002, as the War Party was beating the drum for preventive war on Iraq, lest we wake up to “a mushroom cloud over an American city,” The Wall Street Journal introduced an eminent voice to confirm that, yes, Saddam was driving straight for an atomic bomb.

“This is a dictator who is ... feverishly trying to acquire nuclear weapons,” wrote Bibi Netanyahu, former prime minister of Israel.

“Saddam’s nuclear program has changed. He no longer needs one large reactor to produce the deadly material necessary for atomic bombs. He can produce it in centrifuges the size of washing machines that can be hidden throughout the country — and Iraq is a very big country. Even free and unfettered inspections will not uncover these portable manufacturing sites of mass death. ...

“(I)f action is not taken now, we will all be threatened by a much greater peril ... (for) no gas mask and no vaccine can protect against nuclear weapons.”

This was horse manure of a high grade, as high as that which Richard Perle deposited on the podium of the Foreign Policy Research Institute a year earlier, when he informed a stunned audience that Saddam “is busily at work on a nuclear weapon.”

Perle had it straight from Saddam’s “Bomb Maker,” “a man named Kadir Hamza.” Hamza, said Perle, told him that after the Osirak reactor was destroyed by Israel in 1981, Saddam “began to build uranium enrichment facilities, many facilities, and we built 400 of them, and they’re all over the country. Some of them look like farmhouses, some of them look like classrooms, some of them look like warehouses. You’ll never find them. They don’t turn out much, but every day they turn out a little bit of nuclear materials.”

“So,” Perle warned his riveted audience, “it’s simply a matter of time before he acquires nuclear weapons.”

Washing-machine centrifuges in uranium enrichment facilities disguised as barns and chicken coops! And Americans believed it. And so we were stampeded into war against a nation that did not threaten or attack us, to strip it of weapons it did not even have.

That war has cost 4,500 American dead and 35,000 wounded. It has brought death to perhaps a hundred thousand Iraqis. Four million people have been driven from their homes, 2 million, including half the Christians, into exile. Hundreds of thousands of fatherless Iraqi children are being raised by women widowed by that war.

Undaunted, the War Party has a new war planned for us.

Target: Tehran. And Obama may just have boxed himself in.

In return for Bibi's willingness to talk to the Palestinians, Obama agreed to a December deadline for progress in talks with Iran. If the talks are not fruitful by then, America will step on the escalator.

"I've been very clear that I don't take any options off the table with respect to Iran," said the president.

Bibi got what he came for.

By setting a six-month deadline, Obama has given an incentive to Israel, AIPAC, the neocons and even al-Qaida, which wants Shia Iran bombed back to the stone age, to provoke collisions with Iran, until December, then demand that Obama keep his word, suspend talks, impose severe sanctions and start us on the escalator to war.

And, already, the incidents are multiplying.

Iran's supreme leader, the Ayatollah Khamenei, has charged the United States with complicity in cross-border attacks from Kurdistan. Israel threatens Iran almost daily and practices bombing runs to Greece and Gibraltar. Iran says it can destroy Israel and tests a missile that can hit that nation.

Israel claims Iran is trucking weapons into Gaza via Sudan. But how the trucks get through Egypt, cross the Red Sea and Sinai, then pass through Israeli and Egyptian checkpoints is unexplained.

Hillary Clinton yesterday called an Iranian nuclear capability an "extraordinary threat" and said the U.S. goal is "to persuade the Iranian regime that they will actually be less secure if they proceed with their nuclear weapons program."

Query: What nuclear weapons program?

According to the National Intelligence Estimate of 2007, Iran halted its weapons program in 2003. Nor are there any reports of the diversion of Iran's industrial-grade uranium from Natanz or evidence of any secret centrifuge cascade to enrich it to weapons grade.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the EastWest Institute of Russian and U.S. scientists says Tehran is "at least six years away from building a deliverable nuclear weapon," and a Rand Corp. study says that Iran's "ability to wreak havoc in the Middle East through surrogates is exaggerated."

Iran represents no threat to the United States to justify a war.

And as Korea finished Harry Truman, Vietnam finished LBJ, and Iraq finished the Bush Republicans, war with Iran would make Barack — with the situations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq all deteriorating — a one-term president.

Barack had best understand. The crowd manipulating him into war with Iran has in mind, first, obliterating Iran; second, getting rid of him.

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of [Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World](#), ["The Death of the West,"](#) ["The Great Betrayal,"](#) ["A Republic, Not an Empire"](#) and ["Where the Right Went Wrong."](#)

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