

It gives me great pleasure to come to the Foreign Policy Association. Your organization gave me an opportunity for my first real publication, *What the Arabs Think*, which was centered on Iraq in 1952.

The Foreign Policy Association has always had a crucial role in our society, educating us about the world. Never have we needed it more than today. Sometimes this takes courage and always it requires ferreting out obscure information and presenting it in a digestible form to large numbers of people. I say “Bravo” to you.

Speaking personally, I have found that performing a task somewhat like yours in the Foreign Policy Association is often lonely and occasionally contentious. I have had to get accustomed to being virtually alone in positions and predictions: Almost the worst is to go through life hoping one is wrong. But the absolute worst is to be right. Let me give you a personal illustration:

In 1962, I disagreed with the chairman of the Policy Planning Council on our evolving policy toward Vietnam. Walt Rostow was a fair minded man and gave me some weeks off to research the issue and present to the Council what I found. He obviously hoped that I would realize I had been wrong. Unfortunately, I did not. I was then asked by the National War College to give a lecture on the guerrilla warfare to the “best and brightest” of our colonels. I presented an analysis that ended with the prediction that we would lose the Vietnam war. For my audience, Vietnam was the great opportunity of the military career. So, not surprisingly, the officers were very hostile. In fact, I have never met with such a hostile audience. The strict discipline of the War College saved me. All the officers stood at attention and applauded as I left. But if looks could kill, I would certainly have been a casualty of the Vietnam war!

Years passed and in 1973, I was invited back to give another lecture. I picked up the same theme but to protect myself I hedged my bets and ended by saying that I just was trying to provoke thought. An army brigadier general then stood up and said he did not understand why I had ended on this note. I laughed and told the audience of my first appearance there. The general replied, “but we have all been there since.”

For America, Vietnam was a very expensive school.

As a historian, I have always thought that years of investment in research should produce not only an account of the past but should also aspire to guidance for the future. This approach to my work on the Middle East let me to predict – absolutely in opposition to the opinion of the Department of State, the National Security Council and the intelligence community -- the 1967 Middle Eastern war. When my prediction came true, I was called back to the White House to produce a peace treaty. In 2002 and early 2003, I also predicted the course of the Iraqi war and the subsequent occupation. About Iraq and our actions there, I have written a book called *Understanding Iraq*. Senator George McGovern and I have written a new book called *Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan for Withdrawal Now, coming out next week*.

So let me begin with a prediction. Then I will explain why I make it and then I will analyze how I think it will be effected. Next I will summarize the effects of the war and finally turn to what I think is the best alternative policy.

I predict that President Bush will order an attack on Iran before he leaves office and perhaps even before the November 2006 mid-term elections. I think that the odds are 50% on an attack before the elections and 90% before the end of the term.

## II

I arrive at my prediction by looking at the context of decision making in this administration:

I begin where we must -- with the president. Long before he ran for the presidency, Mr. Bush handled the relationship of his father's campaign with the American Christian fundamentalists. He realized that they constituted a massive voting bloc with something like one in five Americans either associated or in sympathy with them. From about this time, Mr. Bush also underwent a personal "rebirth" and emerged with the belief that he had a special, God-given role to fight off the forces of evil and prepare for a new world order.

He was guided into a group of like-minded men by some of his father's old retainers including Dick Cheney including Donald Rumsfeld.

Throughout his term of office, President Bush has relied upon these men who are collectively known as the neoconservatives. He called them "some of the best brains in our country." Among them is the point man for the Middle East on the National Security Council, Elliott Abrams, best known for his role in the Iran-Contra scandal. He is backed up by a number of other neoconservatives who are now or formerly were in key positions within government including Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, Stephen Cambone, John Bolton, James Woolsey, Richard Armitage, Lewis Libby, Abram Shulsky and David Wormser.

These men are backed up, supported and publicized by others outside government including Michael Ladeen, Max Boot, Charles Krauthammer (the *Washington Post* columnist), and William Kristol (editor of the neoconservative journal, *The Weekly Standard*). They are also supported by a network of administration-favored "think tanks" including the American Enterprise Institute and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in addition to various lobbying organizations. Collectively, they have consistently favored military action by the United States against Middle Eastern regimes for the past 17 years. They are still doing so.

As the basis of their doctrine, they took Leon Trotsky's concept of "permanent revolution" and adapted it to their own radical ideology in the guise of "permanent war." Just as Trotsky saw permanent revolution as the means to overawe or destroy foreign opponents and to cow or silence domestic critics, so the neoconservatives see permanent war. War would give them irresistible force because to oppose them would seem an unpatriotic act. As one of their group, former CIA director James Woolsey, put it, "This fourth world war, I think, will last considerably longer than either World Wars I or II did for us. Hopefully not the full four-plus decades of the Cold War." The "long war" the neoconservatives promoted has been embraced by President Bush, Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld as the basis of American foreign policy. Estimates to effect this policy put it in excess of 15 trillion dollars.

The key official document is the March 6, 2006 "National Security Strategy of the United States." It was interpreted by President Bush on March 16, 2006 when he proclaimed that "We choose to deal with challenges now rather than leaving them for future generations. We fight our enemies abroad instead of waiting for them to arrive in our country. We seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it; to influence events for the better instead of being at their mercy."

In this statement, the key words are “challenges,” “now” and “fight.” What precisely do these words mean in terms of action?

Consider first the word “challenge.”

What the Doctrine says on challenge is that “Some states, such as Syria and Iran, continue to harbor terrorists at home and sponsor terrorist activity abroad...Any government that chooses to be an ally of terror, such as Syria or Iran, has chosen to be an enemy of freedom, justice, and peace. The world must hold those regimes to account...Iran has violated its Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards obligations and refuses to provide objective guarantees that its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes...We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran...The Iranian regime sponsors terrorism; threatens Israel; seeks to thwart Middle East peace; disrupts democracy in Iraq; and denies the aspirations of its people for freedom...”

Does Iran really fit these challenges?

The first charge against Iran is sponsoring terrorism: it is a highly likely charge since all states do so when it suits their purposes. We Americans have done so in Iraq, Afghanistan, Central America and many other places and at many times. Iranians remember that we overthrew their elected government in August 1953 and aided Saddam Husain in his war with Iran from 1980 to 1988 by providing it with weapons and intelligence. And it is no secret that we are now engaged in covert activities in Iran which are calculated to “destabilize” its government and incite revolt among Iran’s ethnic minorities. Britain, France, Israel and Russia have long records of using terrorism. So what we should look for is what Iran has actually done or not done.

In Iraq, Iran’s role has been, at least so far, surprisingly restrained. As a close neighbor and as the focal point of the religion and culture of a majority of the Iraqi people, it obviously has a major interest in Iraq, but, despite various charges that it is stirring up trouble there, I have heard no convincing proof that Iran is playing a major role in Iraqi affairs now. If anything it has played a moderating game with the Iraqi Shi’is, as the US government acknowledged by seeking its advice and help recently on how to achieve better relations with the 15 million Iraqi Shi’is. Indeed, the Iranians believe, with reason, that *they* are the targets of terrorist attacks conceived in American occupied Iraq. One group, the People’s *Mujahidin-I khalkh* which is composed of Iranian exiles living in Iraq, has carried out terrorist attacks in several parts of Iran.

Iran has cooperated with the Turks to stop what at least the Turks regarded as a terrorist challenge to their state from the Kurds. Iran also played a crucial role in the defeat of the Taliban. So far, at least, it has kept out of the affairs of the 2 million strong Shi’a community in eastern Saudi Arabia and the majority Shi’a population of Bahrain.

But, Iran has certainly helped the Hizbollah partisans in Lebanon with both money and military equipment. It does not regard Hizbollah as a terrorist organization but a legitimate political party since it is represented in the Lebanese parliament and even in the government. Moreover, it sees Hizbollah’s activities as primarily defensive. This is obviously a debatable question, but we now know the attack on Lebanon had long been planned by Israel and was not just a rejoinder to the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. It was largely armed and paid for by America. American officials – including Elliott Abrams of the National Security Council -- were, apparently, deeply involved in the planning and execution. What was really striking to the Israelis, according to a former member of the Israeli parliament was that, for the first time, the Arabs put up a good resistance: as he said, “Hizbollah shot back when attacked.”

I imagine that the Iranian leaders would describe their policy as support for “freedom fighters” and that they believe that our involvement in the attack on Lebanon and in various actions against Iran is itself tantamount to support for terrorism. As the saying goes, one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. So, I think we must conclude that Iran’s “challenge” is neither unique nor clear. And so far at least, it is of relatively small importance although as I shall point out, it has considerable potential under other circumstances than the present American “cold war” with Iran.

Does Iran, as Mr. Bush said, threaten Israel? Israel has the strongest army in western Asia and somewhere between 400 and 600 nuclear weapons. No one believes that Iran now has any nuclear weapons -- in fact, the founder of the current regime Ayatollah Khomeini stopped the program to get them which the Shah had started with American aid -- and it certainly does not have the means to transport its 850,000 man but relatively weak army abroad. Hearing of an Iranian threat to Israel reminds one of the charge that Iraq threatened the United States. It does not have the means, but does it have the intent?

The famous quotation from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmed-i Nejad was mistranslated. He never said he intended to “wipe Israel off the map.” He certainly does not like Israel and has said a number of harsh words about it, and, as we all know, he did come out with a foolish denial of the holocaust. But what he said was that Israel as now conceived is an anomaly and will either transform itself or will fade away. Many outside observers, although fearful of being changed with anti-Semitism if they say so publicly, privately agree. A few weeks ago, reacting to the events of the Middle East, Alan Hart of the BBC openly told an audience at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London that “what we might now be witnessing is the long beginning of the end of the Zionist state of Israel.”

Ahmed-i Nejad also said, and most Muslims would agree with him, that Muslims (and Christian Palestinians) should not be made to pay for European persecution of the Jews. Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald and the other camps were not built by Arabs but by Europeans. It is we not the Persians or the Arabs who have been the anti-Semites but us.

Whatever we think about Iran, it is certainly no threat to Israel.

What about nuclear weapons?

While Iran has been a difficult and recalcitrant party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, it is at least a signatory whereas neither Israel, India nor Pakistan ever even signed it. Israel has, in fact had a clandestine nuclear weapons program for over 50 years. Pakistan and India both also developed their weapons secretly. Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea have nuclear weapons. Iran does not.

Moreover, while Mr. Bush charged that Iran has not met its commitment to the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, it actually has not violated that treaty as far as anyone knows. What it did violate is the codicil to the treaty which it signed more or less voluntarily and which no other state has signed. Ironically, it is us who have violated the provision of the treaty that called for the existing nuclear powers, the British, French and Americans, to cut back on our arsenals. This we have not done.

Again, ironically, it is the Israeli nuclear program, not Iran, that is the real threat to Israel. Sooner or later, other Middle Eastern and Central Asian states are bound to follow Israel’s lead and acquire or build nuclear weapons. Probably, within our lifetimes, perhaps even within a decade

or so, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Uzbekistan, perhaps one or more of the very rich Gulf States and even a reconstituted Iraq *could* acquire them.

*Would they?* That will depend on how threatened they feel. Fear of America and/or Israel is a clear and (nearly) present danger.

We must do everything in our power to prevent this since *nuclear weapons anywhere are a threat to people everywhere*. Accidents are always possible and they are more likely when governments acquire weapons by short-cuts rather than having to go through the long learning process inherent in designing and building them. Keeping them reasonably safe is also very expensive both in terms of motivated, trained and controlled technicians, scientists and politicians and also in money. I think we must assume that the next layer of nuclear powers will have fewer resources than the older, more established nuclear powers. Consequently, they present a heightened danger.

Finally, Mr. Bush charges that the Iranian government denies “the aspirations of its people for freedom...” There is no question that the regime of the mullahs is based on religious fundamentalism and enforces, often brutally, social and cultural codes within that philosophy. I find this very unattractive and would not like to live under a fundamentalist regime. But, there is no question that Iran is far less arbitrary and brutal than Uzbekistan whose extremely violent leader President Bush has categorized as a firm ally and has just entertained here in America. Moreover, unlike Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan, Iran’s government is the product of what everyone believes to have been a relatively free and fair election. We may not like the Iranian government, but we cannot deny that it represents the Iranian people. Close observers in Tehran believe Ahmad-i Nejad would easily win if a new election were held today. Thus, although President Bush is right that the Iranian government denies the right of its people to live as we think they should, they have done it with the consent of the governed.

The second key word in the National Security Strategy of the United States is “now.” The published doctrine cannot precisely set a timetable because timing is subject to many factors. However, from a variety of official and unofficial sources, the word begins to take on meaning. The US director of national intelligence, John Negroponte said on the BBC in June this year that Iran could have a nuclear weapon in 5 to 10 years. “Now” is thus not exactly what most of us mean by that word.

However, there is another “now.” We know that in recent months, the Strategic Air Command (STRATCOM) has been instructed to prepare plans for a strike against Iran; while, obviously, the preparation of a plan is not the same as the command to implement it, the fact that the key military command has been engaged raises the level of likelihood.

Perhaps more significant in defining now is that many of President Bush’s statements make clear his determination to settle the “Iran problem” before he leaves office. Arnaud de Borchgrave, who reputedly has a close relationship to the President, wrote on August 29 in *The Washington Times* (of which he is editor-at-large), “Mr. Bush is convinced a nuclear Iran would pose an intolerable threat to U.S. national security and, as one former intelligence topsider put it, ‘he is firm in his faith that God agrees with him on that point, and certain that history will eventually recognize and properly appreciate his courageous and visionary leadership.’” Mr. Bush has also claimed that he has the authority to attack Iran under the Congressional bill that authorized the attack on Afghanistan.

We cannot expect to find a definite date for the action, but if President Bush is to act he must do so within the coming two years. So many people, coming from so many places in and around the US government are describing an escalation of planning and other preparation as well as much preparatory actions that we cannot avoid taking it seriously.

Moreover, the way comments seem to be orchestrated is reminiscent of the build-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. There certainly seems to be a campaign to convince the public that war is inevitable and that it cannot long be deferred. Some have even charged that there is a political motive – to divert attention from Iraq by whipping up a new crisis and avoid what looks increasingly like a failure at the polls in this November.

So, as I have said, I am inclined to think “now” means sometime before the end of 2008. I think it is likely to be sooner. It is ominous that the powerful U.S. Navy battle group formed around the carrier Eisenhower will arrive in the Persian Gulf just a week before the mid-term US elections.

The third key word in the National Security Strategy of the United States” is “fight.” The March 2005 “National Defense Strategy” proclaimed that “America is a nation at war” and warned that “At the direction of the President, we will defeat adversaries at the time, place, and in the manner of our choosing...” And, “when deterrence fails or efforts short of military action do not forestall gathering threats, the United States will employ military power...In all cases, we will seek to seize the initiative and dictate the tempo, timing, and direction of military operations...These include preventive actions...”

The key questions are two: what would justify the war and how would it be fought?

First, justification: Unless there is an imminent threat – which with the Iranians years away from having a nuclear weapon and the credible belief that they are about to use it – an attack on Iran would be unilateral act of war and if undertaken without Congressional approval would be unconstitutional. Of course, pretexts can be manufactured as they were in the Tonkin Gulf incident and allegedly were projected for Iraq in a plan code named “Anabasis,” but actions of that kind are dangerous, subject to exposure and often fail. At the present time, as I have argued, there is no reasonable justification for an American attack on Iran.

If we assume, as I think we must, it is definite that the Bush administration has ruled out Acquiescence, it might try sanctions but draconian sanctions such as were imposed upon Iraq in the 1990s are probably not feasible because such a program will be opposed by members of the Security Council which stand to lose crucial revenue and access to oil. In any event, sanctions would be unlikely to deter the Iranian government from actions it believes necessary for its survival.

So the more likely form of force is military attack. This could come in any one of three forms or some combination of them: A US attack by air power alone, a ground invasion as in the 1991 and 2003 attacks on Iraq, or the encouragement of an Israeli attack. I will focus on an American strike:

The administration’s National Security Doctrine foresees “preventive actions...” The form of “Preventive Action” now under the most intense study is aerial bombardment. This is attractive because with a large part of its combat forces committed to Iraq, America does not have the troops a land invasion would require and it is extremely unlikely that any other country – including England -- would make up its deficit. In the last few days, world leaders have come out

flatly against the idea of a military option: German Prime Minister Merkel told the Bundestag on September 6 that “The military option isn’t an option.” While she was speaking, the Chinese foreign minister said, “China advocates that this issue be resolved through negotiation and dialog in a peaceful way and this position remains unchanged.” The French foreign minister proclaimed on September 5 that France does not support a military action and the Italian and Russian foreign ministers echoed the same sentiment. According to the well informed English Middle Eastern specialist and journalist Patrick Seale, the British government has told the Bush administration that it will not take part in any armed action against Iran. Probably the sole “ally” America has in this planned operation is Israel. Its former chief of staff, General Moshe Ya’alon recently told an audience in Washington that Israel was prepared to act, but, even before the disastrous outcome of the Israeli attack on Lebanon, other Israeli officials have pulled back from that position, saying that Iran was America’s venture. So America would be virtually alone.

What would aerial bombardment entail? What it involved in Iraq gives at least a starting point: In some 37,000 sorties the US Air Force dropped 13,000 “cluster munitions” that exploded into 2 million bombs, wiping out whole areas, and fired 23,000 missiles. Naval ships launched 750 Cruise missiles with another 1.5 million pounds of explosives. We are told that today these weapons have been improved. Air Force General Thomas McInerney gave the neoconservative magazine *The Weekly Standard* in April an inventory of an “improved “force: the 14 ton bunker buster, 2½ ton bunker “penetrators,” 1 ton bunker busters, half ton and quarter ton general purpose bombs. McInerney pointed out that a B-2 bomber can drop 80 500 pound bombs independently targeted at 80 different aim points. In effect, this aerial bombardment would eclipse the “shock and awe” of 2003 and be far more destructive than the 1991 campaign or the devastating air war on Vietnam. But would it work? Tragically, we have a test case in Lebanon.

Seymour Hersh reported in *The New Yorker* talks he had with current and retired American military and intelligence experts who told him that the Israeli bombing of Lebanon was regarded as “a prelude to a potential American preemptive attack to destroy Iran’s nuclear installations.” But, that, horrible as the effects were, they were disappointing to the Israelis. As former Deputy of State Richard Armitage said, “If the most dominant military force in the region – the Israel Defense Forces – can’t pacify a country like Lebanon, with a population of four million, you should think carefully about taking that template to Iran, with strategic depth and a population of seventy million...The only thing that the bombing has achieved so far is to unite the [Lebanese] population against the Israelis.”

Hersh was told that the Air Force proposals for an aerial bombardment have been resisted by the senior generals of the Army, Navy and Marine corps. “They argue,” Hersh said, “that the Air Force plan will not work and will inevitably lead, as in the Israeli war with Hezbollah, to the insertion of troops on the ground.” As General Wesley Clark also told Hersh, “In my experience, air campaigns have to be backed, ultimately, by the will and capability to finish the job on the ground.”

Despite the misgivings of the military professionals, Joseph Cirincione wrote in the March issue of *Foreign Policy* that conversations with senior officials in the Pentagon and the White House had convinced him that the decision for war had already been made. The *Washington Post* has reported that at least since March, large teams are at work on invasion plans in the Pentagon and the intelligence agencies, while the Iran “desk” at the State Department has been augmented to task force size. It is headed by a man from the staff of the International Republican Institute who will work under Elizabeth Cheney, daughter of the vice president, who is assistant secretary of state for the Near East. In the Pentagon, a similar organization has been established to which Abram Shulsky, former head of the “Office of Special Plans,” the neoconservative alternative to

the CIA's Office of National Estimates and the State Department's Office of Intelligence and Research, has been assigned. In addition a new outpost has been set up in Dubai to coordinate plans. From London, a Conservative newspaper known to be close to the defense establishment, reported in April that the senior British generals have concluded that an American-led attack is "inevitable." So far as I have been able to find out, all current plans focused on an aerial strike. But since they were made, Israel has had its war with Lebanon. So I presume that emphasis has now shifted and that a ground attack must be included in the planning.

#### What would a ground war entail?

Obviously, I am not privy to the work of U.S. STRIKECOM, but I think its shape and direction is not hard to guess. Either during or immediately after a massive aerial bombardment, special forces teams would be inserted into Iran. Their task would be to go down into the nuclear installations to destroy what the aerial attack missed. However, it is almost certain that enough of these teams would get caught that larger ground forces would have to go in and try to rescue them. Much of Iran's 850,000 man army, like Saddam's smaller force, would have been wiped out or disorganized, but Iran has a 150,000 man national guard which would immediately take up guerrilla warfare. They showed their fanatical devotion to their country during the Iraq-Iran war and almost certainly would do so again. Iran is large and has several times the population of Iraq; so it could, and almost certainly would, fight a protracted guerrilla war. Preparing for it, Iran has been building a stockpile of suitable equipment from armor-piercing rifles to night-vision goggles. Although the governing religious establishment is not popular with many Iranians, they are firm nationalists. No more than the Iraqis in 2003 or the Cubans in the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 would Iranians be out in the streets with flowers in their hands welcoming foreign troops.

Moreover, the war would be fought not only in Iran but also, as the Iranian government has warned us, in three other areas:

The first is a counterattack by Iran's Fajr-3 missiles which can carry multiple warheads and can reach at least as far as Israel.

The second is the so-called "oil weapon." If Iran takes its 5% of the world's flow of oil off the market (which would almost certainly happen whether or not it decides to do so), the price of oil will skyrocket. The recent price rise from \$50/a barrel to \$80 reduced American income by about \$102 billion. A rise to \$120 would cost America an additional \$680 billion. The effect on the American and world economies of a larger price rise would be catastrophic. At \$150, which many oil experts think likely, the loss of US national income would be nearly \$1 trillion and 200 million. Is this unrealistic? I think not. Iran would almost surely not be an isolated campaign. Saudi Arabia's oil is produced by mainly Shi'i workers who are presumably sympathetic to Iran and might engage in sabotage or strikes. Tanker transit of the Gulf would be difficult and costly and the Iranians have in place missiles to interdict it. Other countries would surely use the crisis for their own benefit, putting further pressure on prices.

The third aspect of the war is almost certain to be an increase in attacks on American and Israeli targets world wide. Shi'is constitute large parts of the populations of the Gulf States, Pakistan and even Turkey. In Lebanon, the most powerful single political group, *Hizbullah*, is a Shi'a-based movement. And, of course, Iraq now has a Shi'a-led government, many of whose leaders spent much of their lives in Iran and whose militia is Iranian trained. Even the Kurdish leader, Jalal Talabani, a Sunni Muslim, has very close ties to Iran. An American attack on Iran would push the Iraqis Shi'is into what has been heretofore a mainly Sunni resistance; it would do more to unite Sunnis and Shi'is than any effort they could mount on their own behalf.

To think through the dangers and prospects of a possible campaign, American strategists have been playing war games on Iran for several years. One, known as Tirannt took place during the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2002 and 2003. American and British officers also played a war game code named Hotspur 2004 at Fort Belvoir in July 2004. Both called for a combination of air and ground assault. They also, according to the specialist on military planning for the *Washington Post*, William Arkin, involved nuclear weapons. I presume that other war games have been enacted since.

Consider now the costs of even an initially successful attack: To do so, take the Iraqi figures and multiply by, perhaps four, given Iran's larger size, greater oil production, and probably greater determination and outreach. The Iraqi costs are:

- Money \$7.1 billion a month, or \$237 a day or \$10 million an hour so Iran would cost perhaps 25 to 30 billion a month.
- The Real cost to the American society (as calculated by Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes) of the Iraq war was estimated at an aggregate of \$1-\$2 trillion; so Iran could be expected to cost between \$4 and 8 trillion.
- American casualties in Iraq now total nearly 2,600. So we could anticipate perhaps 10,000 in Iran.
- American wounded from the Iraq war number about 18,000 of whom roughly half are permanently incapacitated; so Iran can be predicted at perhaps nearly 80,000.
- 50,000 veterans of the Iraq war are estimated to need long-term psychiatric help and at least 50,000 more have multiple or severe concussions resulting in memory lost, fuzzy thinking or severe headaches. This category of wounded was not even identified until this year. Could a campaign in Iran produce less?
- An unknown number of men and women who served in Iraq will develop cancer as a result of the use of depleted uranium in artillery shells and aerial bombs. If the Bushehr reactor is up and running, as it should be this year, a strike on it could cause as much cancer to people elsewhere as the Chernoble accident did.
- In FY 2005, the US borrowed \$540 billion in part to disguise the effect of the war on the American population. It would need to borrow much more for Iran.

Such a course of events would present us with what the neoconservative former head of the CIA, James Woolsey foresaw – and advocated – as a generation or more of “permanent war. As historians have pointed out, what destroyed other great empires was not military defeat but financial collapse. Investment banker Felix Rohatyn predicted that such a course of action as this would be financially “unbearable.” No one knows what “permanent war” (or as the Pentagon has dubbed it, “the Long War”) would cost but estimates run to at least \$15 trillion. Not surprisingly the conservative journal *The Economist* editorialized that the Neoconservatives are not conservatives. They are radicals whose agenda would virtually destroy the world in which we live and the good life we have worked hard to build.

These are powerful deterrents, but driven by ideology, miscalculation of the cost or determination to change Iran's regime, America might still attack.

So what should we do? The intelligent starting point in strategy as in business is almost always to try to find out what the other fellow wants and what he fears. I think Iran wants three things:

First, access to the top order of technology which is symbolized and partly contained in nuclear science;

Second, parity with the major powers in the world – it is impossible to overemphasize the pride of Iranians in their culture and history; underneath the veil of religious fanaticism is nationalism; and

Third, protection against invasion and “regime change” by the United States and/or Israel.

I believe that these objects are not impossible for us to accept.

Will disagreements and dangers continue to exist? Undoubtedly. They do everywhere around the world at times. But, my strong belief is that the way to diminish the threat our society and way of life is precisely the opposite of what the Israelis and the Bush administration are now threatening to do, attack Iran. Instead:

- we need to renounce the preemptive strike option in the administration’s national security doctrine;
- stop trying to subvert the Iranian regime as we are now doing;
- engage as we are doing even with North Korea in dialog and, above all,
- urgently, intelligently and energetically push toward regional nuclear disarmament. We have experience in this field and were making substantial progress on it until a decade ago. We need to go back and start again. That is in everyone’s interest. Israel could take the lead in this venture, to its own national interest. America should support it in its national interest. Other states, including Iran, will find such a policy to be in their nationalist interest. The great inhibition is fear. That is what we must work to overcome. It will not be easy, but the stakes are very high. We cannot afford failure.

But, is anyone in the Administration, in Congress or even in the press thinking in these terms? If so, with a few exceptions, they are very quiet. So the public apparently believes we have only two, not three, options: acquiescence or war. If forced to chose between them, Americans will support Bush in attacking Iran.

For our own safety and well-being, I believe, we must push for the un-discussed third option, regional nuclear arms control.

As a people we are very forgetful. We should have learned from history that a foreign power cannot win a guerrilla war. The British learned it from our ancestors in the American Revolution and relearned it in Ireland; Napoleon learned it in Spain; the Germans learned it in Yugoslavia; we should have learned it in Vietnam; the Russians learned it in Afghanistan and are relearning it in Chechnya; we are learning it in Iraq.

As a people we are also vain. Our way is the only way. We should have learned that the rich and powerful cannot always succeed against the poor and less powerful. Rather than being caught in failures, as we were in Vietnam and are in Iraq, we should anticipate problems. The nuclear issue is a glaring example. The 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was bound to be challenged by some and subverted by others. It allowed only Russia, America, France, Britain and China to have these weapons. Israel, North Korea, India and Pakistan refused to abide by it. We can be sure that other states will follow – perhaps already are following – their lead. We should anticipate this challenge not by threats, which will only make fearful governments more determined to acquire what they think they need to protect themselves but by scaling back the threat everywhere.

As a people we are also astonishingly ignorant about the world. This is one of the things that is so important about your organization. But you have your work cut out for you. Long ago, the

great American satirist Ambrose Bierce remarked that war was God's way of teaching American geography. We have proved to be poor pupils. The results of surveys are depressing. The National Geographic and Roper found that this year, after three years of war in Iraq, 6 out of 10 young Americans could not even locate Iraq on a map, much less having a clue about its society, culture, politics or economics.

But a glacial shift is taking place at the upper reaches of our military. For the first time in American history, it is the men who have experienced combat, our senior military officers, who are warning the civilians, the neoconservatives, none of whom seems to have ever experienced combat, away from war.

Marine Corps General Gregory Newbold has urged senior officers to put aside their careers and speak out in public what they are saying in private that our policy is putting our society in mortal danger; Marine General Anthony Zinni, former chief of the Central Command, has characterized the neoconservatives as "insane" and the policy of staying the course "like heading over Niagara Falls." Marine General Joseph Hoar who was commander-in-chief of the US Central Command called for the government "to get rid of these people,,the neo-conservatives [who sold] the president the need for the invasion of Iraq."

This is not a partisan issue. It is a matter of national interest – indeed perhaps of national survival.

Richard Clarke (former national coordinator for security and counterterrorism)and Steven Simon (senior director for counterterrorism in the National Security Council) wrote in *The International Herald Tribune* on May 18, 2006, that "The parallels to the run-up to war with Iraq are all too striking. Congress did not ask the hard questions then. It must not permit the administration to mount another war whose outcome cannot be known, or worse, known all too well."

We have been warned: George Bush senior wrote after the 1991 war, "had we gone the invasion route, the United States could conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land." He was right. We are. The question is, are we going to follow his advice on Iraq or the lead of his son into Iran.