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We're Being Set Up for Wider War in the Middle East

by Paul Craig Roberts

07/17/06 "Information Clearing House" -- -- The old adage, "fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me" does not apply to Americans, who have shown that they can be endlessly fooled.

Neoconservatives deceived Americans into an illegal attack and debilitating war in Iraq. American neoconservatives are closely allied with Israel's Likud Party. In the past, some neocons lost their security clearances because of "mishandling" of classified information. According to *Insight magazine*, "the Pentagon has banned security clearance to Americans with relatives in Israel. Government sources and attorneys said the Pentagon has sought and succeeded in removing security clearance from dozens of Americans, mostly Jews, who either lived, worked, or have relatives in Israel."

Despite questions of dual loyalties, neocons hold high positions in the Bush regime. Ten years ago these architects of American foreign and military policy spelled out how they would use deception to achieve "important Israeli strategic objectives" in the Middle East. First, they would focus "on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq." This would open the door for Israel to provoke attacks from Hezbollah. The attacks would let Israel gain American sympathy and permit Israel to seize the strategic initiative by "engaging Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran as the principal agents of aggression in Lebanon."

Today, this neoconservative plan is unfolding before our eyes. Israel has used the capture of two of its soldiers in Lebanon as an excuse for an all-out air and naval bombardment against Lebanese civilian targets. However, a number of commentators have pointed out that such a massive attack requires weeks if not months of preparation that could not be done overnight in response to the capture of the soldiers.

Regardless, in the first two days of the Israeli military attack on Lebanon more than a hundred civilians, including Canadians, have been killed by Israeli bombs (gifts from U.S. taxpayers). The Beirut International Airport has been repeatedly bombed, as have residential neighborhoods, roads, bridges, ports, and power stations.

Soldiers are a legitimate military target. Civilians, civilian neighborhoods, tourists, and international airports are not. Under the Nuremberg standard used to sentence Nazi war criminals to death, the Israeli government is clearly guilty of war crimes.

Meanwhile, the Israelis are committing identical war crimes in Gaza. Again Israel's excuse is the capture of an Israeli soldier. However, the distinguished Israeli professor Ran HaCohen said that the Israeli army "had been demanding a massive attack on Gaza long before the Israeli soldier was kidnapped."

By blocking UN Security Council action against Israel for its massacre of civilians in Gaza, the Bush regime has made itself complicit in these monstrous war crimes. Just as Germans who supported Hitler were deemed to be complicit in his war crimes, Americans who support Bush are complicit in Bush's war crimes.

Hezbollah is not the Lebanese government. It does not rule Lebanon. Hezbollah is the militia organization founded in 1982 in response to Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Hezbollah defeated the Israeli army and drove out the Israeli invaders six years ago.

According to the BBC, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said that the two Israeli soldiers "were captured to pressure Israel to release the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in its jails," especially the women and children.

The BBC also notes that although Hezbollah operates "from Lebanese territory and the militant group has two ministers in the Lebanese government, the central government is almost powerless to influence the militant group." (Note that the BBC applies the loaded word "militant" to Hezbollah but not to Israel.) Hezbollah, reports the BBC, "is also very popular in Lebanon and highly respected for its political activities, social services, and its military record against Israel."

The prime minister of Lebanon, who was installed with President Bush's approval when Syria, under Bush's pressure, recently withdrew its troops from Lebanon, has twice appealed to Bush to pressure Israel to stop its criminal attacks. Our great moral, democratic, Christian leader has twice rebuffed the appeal from the legal representative of the Lebanese people. Instead, Bush is willingly going along with the 1996 neocon script. Bush is laying the blame on Syria and Iran, exactly as the

neocon script calls for him to do.

When Bush demands that Syria "stop Hezbollah attacks," he forgets that he was the one who forced Syria out of Lebanon (to enable Israel to attack Lebanon). If Americans were attentive, they would be ashamed to witness "their" president acting as an Israeli propagandist.

Fox "News," CNN, and the rest of the Bush propaganda ministry are echoing the lie that innocent Israel is under attack from the "terrorist states" of Syria and Iran through their surrogate, Hezbollah. Americans, who are sick of the Iraq occupation and want the troops home, are being fooled again and set up for wider war in the Middle East.

Evangelical "Christians" are part of the propaganda show. Three thousand of them, under the lead of the Rev. John C. Hagee, are heading to Washington for a "Washington/Israel summit" to demand, needlessly, that the neocon Bush regime show "stronger support for Israel."

It is difficult to see how Bush could show any stronger support without using the U. S. military to assist Israel in its attacks, which is, of course, what the "Christian" Rev. Hagee intends when he declares: "There's a new Hitler in the Middle East [he doesn't mean Bush or Olmert]. The only way he will be stopped will be by a preemptive military strike in Iran."

Present at Rev. Hagee's "Washington/Israel Summit" will be Israel's former Minister of Defense, Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon, Republican National Committee Chairman Ken Mehlman, Republican Senators Sam Brownback and Rick Santorum, the Rev. Jerry Falwell, and Gary Bauer.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the most powerful lobby in Washington, expressed its thanks to Rev. Hagee for demonstrating "the depth and breadth of American support" for Israel. Recently, AIPAC has been under investigation as a suspected nest for Israeli spies.

David Brog, former chief of staff for Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, has gone to work for Rev. Hagee. Brog, who is Jewish, says he works for Hagee's evangelical enterprise because "we're bringing into a pro-Israel camp millions of Christians who love Israel and giving them a political voice. Israel's enemies are our enemies, and this group instinctively understands that." Brog goes on to say that Hagee's evangelicals understand that they are not supposed to talk about Jesus, only about saving Israel: "Christians who work with Jews in supporting Israel realize how sensitive we are in talking about Jesus. They realize it will interfere with what they

are trying to do."

Gentle reader, is this an admission that evangelicals have set aside Jesus for war? Do these bloody-minded evangelicals really believe they will be wafted to Heaven for helping Israel involve the U.S. in more war? Have evangelicals forgotten that "an eye for an eye" is Old Testament? "Turn the other cheek" is New Testament.

On July 14, Reuters reported that alone among Christians, the "Vatican condemns Israel for attacks on Lebanon."

Whose delusion is the greatest – the evangelical "rapture" delusion, the neocon delusion about American power, or the Zionist delusion? The three together mean disaster for America, Israel, and the world.

One of the great evangelical/Zionist/neocon myths is that "tiny Israel" armed with 200 nuclear weapons is threatened by Muslim Middle Eastern countries. In actual fact, Egypt and Pakistan, which have the bulk of the Middle Eastern Muslim population, are ruled by American puppets. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the oil emirates are totally dependent on U.S. protection and, thereby, are also under the American thumb. Iran is Persian, not Arab, and has no common borders with Israel. Hezbollah was created when Israel tried to seize Lebanon in 1982. Hamas is a Palestinian response to the atrocities Palestinians have suffered for a half century at Israel's hands.

Israel's land-stealing policy is the source of Middle Eastern instability. America is hated because American money and weapons are what enable Israel to steal Palestine from Palestinians.

As numerous Middle East experts have pointed out, what is decried as "Arab terrorism against Israel" is, in fact, the only tactic Muslims have for calling the world's attention to the plight of the Palestinians, about which Americans are generally ignorant.

It is absurd for Bush to condemn Syria for not behaving as an American puppet and for not fighting Israel's battles by taking on Hezbollah. Syria and Iran (and Iraq prior to the U.S. invasion) are the only Middle Eastern countries independent of American control. It is far beyond the boundaries of reason and morality to expect these two remaining independent countries to give up their independence in order to enable Israel to steal Palestine and southern Lebanon.

It is the refusal of Syria and Iran (and Saddam Hussein's Iraq) to stand with Israel against Palestine that has made them targets for American attack. Neocons have

total control of U.S. foreign policy in the Bush regime, and they have morphed our strategic interests into Israel's.

As the neoconservative architects of Bush's wars revealed in 1996, their concern lies with *Israeli* strategic objectives.

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