

## The Pentagon's Man in From the Cold

Written by

Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17 - Last Updated Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17

---

### The Pentagon's Man in From the Cold

**TO** - Dahr Jamail - During the Veterans for Peace National Convention in Seattle, I conducted an interview with Ray McGovern. McGovern was a CIA analyst for 27 years and is co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS). In this first installment of this short interview series for Truthout, I asked McGovern what he thought of the fact that Israel had been planning their attack on Lebanon for well over a year.

*www.truthout.org*

### [Interview With Ray McGovern, Part&nbsp;I](#)

#### **Dahr Jamail**

t r u t h o u t | Perspective  
21 August 2006

Ray McGovern: The most important thing, from our perspective, is to determine what role the US government played. It's very clear that the US government not only gave the green light to the Israelis, but actively encouraged them to do what they are doing now, and then blocked diplomatic efforts to prevent them, to halt them, or to have an immediate cease-fire. That much is clear. You can even read Charles Krauthamer, who says precisely that: that we are proud that we not only gave the permission, but we encouraged them to do precisely what they are doing.

Now, the question arises, why? What in God's name would possess our so-called neo-con leadership to persuade this new fledgling Israeli government, which represents in my understanding a right-wing fringe of the Israeli people and not at all the Israeli people as a whole, just as our government represents the extremist right wing of the Republican Party? These so-called neo-conservatives who pretty much mounted and successfully waged a putsch of our government early in this administration, what in God's name do they have in mind?

The tactics they used seem to be identical to the invasion of Iraq. We called it "shock and awe." Well, a lot of the Lebanese, as well as the world populace, are shocked and awed quite enough, thank you very much, by what the Israelis are doing. It's incredible that we would see that they would take out the infrastructure of a whole country as a way of "retaliating" against the capture of two Israeli prisoners of war, the capture of them, rather than the kidnapping of two Israelis.

## The Pentagon's Man in From the Cold

Written by

Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17 - Last Updated Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17

---

So, obviously this thing was planned well in advance, and the timing really gives me great pause, because this was a situation where there were glimmers of hope that the neo-cons in our government were taking a back seat to more enlightened and more flexible policy, specifically vis-?-vis Iran. It looks very much to me, from what the president, Condoleezza Rice and others have said, that this could be used, and may be designed to be used intentionally, to go after the Iranians and the Syrians on the pretext that they were the ones who really put Hezbollah up to this, as well as Hamas in Gaza. And now we really have to go to the source and destroy the authors of this.

That sounds extreme, but we're dealing with people who ... well, in my days in government, were widely known as "the crazies." I kid you not. This was the case from the very top levels of government, and I can speak personally of that, down to the lowest analysts in the CIA.

I'd come in on a Monday morning and somebody would say, "Hey Ray, guess what the crazies did on Friday afternoon." And I'd know exactly what the allusion was to. It would be [Paul] Wolfowitz, it would be [Richard] Perle, it would be that whole coterie of folks. Now, to his great credit the first President Bush had the good sense to keep close to him people with good sense. General Brent Scowcroft, his National Security Advisor, Jim Baker, his Secretary of State, and they told him, "Mr. President, you can't get rid of the crazies because the right wing of our party would be up in arms, so let Perle and Wolfowitz hang around at the middle reaches of the Pentagon, but for God's sake don't let them get this country into trouble." And he did. And he listened. And when [Wolfowitz came out with that crazy report in 1992](#) that foreshadowed all this business, the Defense Policy Review, and someone leaked that to the New York Times, Baker and Scowcroft went right into the president's office and said to the first President Bush, "You've got to disavow this right away." Which he did.

Now, imagine our surprise, those of us who knew about the crazies, when we found them in the key policy-making positions. Not only they, but the likes of convicted felon Elliot Abrams, who is running our policy toward the Middle East right out of the White House as Deputy National Security Advisor, right now as we speak.

So it seems to me what has happened here is that they have, together with the infamous Cheney/Rumsfeld cabal, of which Colonel Wilkerson, Colin Powell's Chief of Staff often speaks, Cheney/Rumsfeld and this coterie of neo-conservatives plus Elliot Abrams, who fits that category, had decided, "Well, we're going to input the rest of that famous study that several of them wrote back in 1996, called, ["A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm.](#)"

## The Pentagon's Man in From the Cold

Written by

Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17 - Last Updated Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17

---

Why do I mention that? I won my intelligence spurs as an analyst of Soviet affairs. We used to take very seriously reading Pravda and the ideological visionary statements that came out of the Soviet Union. Karl Marx, Lenin and all of the rest of them. They had to be taken seriously and often we found very conclusive clues as to what they had in mind.

So, it's not a big effort to go and put PNAC in your URL line and download some of the documents from the [Project for the New American Century](#) and the "Clean Break" study, and you will see that all of this was very well presented to Netanyahu when he was elected Israeli premier. In the first instance, it was too radical even for Netanyahu, and that's saying something.

Well, this is the policy that is being implemented now. You can read it, it's in the text: "We will go after Lebanon. We will find a pretext which will justify us going after Lebanon big time. Next, Iran. Next, Syria." And of course Iraq came in the preceding paragraphs. The plan is laid out there. Anyone who doesn't take that seriously dismisses it at their own peril.

I see this as the first step, having encouraged Israel, and the supreme irony is that this young Israeli government doesn't seem to realize that this is hardly in the long-term interests of Israel. It's hardly even in the medium-term interests of Israel. Israel cannot survive without making peace with its neighbors. It cannot survive if it takes up the sword every time it pleases, because the US is not going to survive in that area either. Witness what's happening in Iraq, to which very little attention is being paid.

The bottom line here, in my view, is that both the US and the Israelis are in perilous circumstances now. That they will be run out of the Middle East in the next couple of years. That is exaggerating, but my point is that their policies are failed policies. Unless Israel changes its tune, and decides that shock and awe is not going to work over the long term, I fear for Israel's future because I'm concerned about that. And of course I'm concerned about the US GIs we have in Iraq.

The whole situation seems terribly sad, terribly unfixable, and terribly dangerous insofar as this: if the plan is to use what's happening in Lebanon as a pretext, of which these PNAC documents really speak, if that's what's afoot here and we're going to say Iran is behind all of this and we have to go to the source and prevent Iran from supplying rockets to Hezbollah and so forth, then the Israelis, whether with our without our permission this time, take some shots at Iran from the air and our blue-suited generals decide we can bomb the heck out of their

## The Pentagon's Man in From the Cold

Written by

Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17 - Last Updated Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17

---

suspected nuclear sites and go ahead and do so, then we will have WWII. Then we will have Iran wrecking the economy of the western world by hitting the oil heads in the Gulf or blocking the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranians can retaliate, and it seems idiocy, it seems just craziness for the US to be thinking about going after Iran.

These policy-makers are so naive, they have no concept of what this will do to the Chinese, or even the Russians. The Chinese have long term oil deals with Iran. They're not about to as they would put it, "sit idly by" and watch us do this to Iran. They have all kinds of potential to hurt us and to hurt us very badly. And they will, if we start to attack Iran.

Not only that, but if you're worried about the price of gasoline, you might want to invest in the company that's building new meters for the pumps because they are going to have to add another digit. It's not going to be nine dollars a gallon anymore; it's going to be ten dollars a gallon. You don't have to trust McGovern for that - listen to what the Saudi ambassador is saying about that, listen to what the Saudi foreign minister is saying. So, for Americans who don't really care very much about what is happening in Lebanon, even though they know what is happening, well they ought to look to their pocketbooks at least and think that if this is part of a long-term strategy to go after Iran, and the economic consequences for our country are going to be so severe that we're going to have to pay ten dollars a gallon for our gasoline, maybe then the self-interested Americans will wake up and say, "The morality of this doesn't bother us much, but hey, please don't do it because we don't want to have to pay \$10 per gallon."

That's not cynical, I'm sorry to say, that's real. Because Americans really haven't been affected by this war, and Americans really haven't been informed about this war. In Vietnam we had photos, we had journalists who were not embedded or in bed with the government. That was a huge difference between that situation and the one which exists now.

I like to refer to what my four-year-old granddaughter said when she saw me on TV. When it was all over she went to my daughter and said, "Mommy, that was grandpa. That means the other people are real too." Now, that's sort of cute on the surface, but think about what that means. If you don't know someone in the picture, the other people aren't real too. And we're deprived even of the pictures of the carnage that's going on in Iraq, and now in Lebanon. And we have to fess up to that and realize that unless we get our hearts involved in this, as well as our minds, we're not going to be able to stand up and do our duty as American patriots and face down this situation and say to our government, "Enough. Enough. No more carnage. Bring our troops home from Iraq. And reign in this Israeli government that is using your helicopter gun ships, your fighter-bombers, your tanks, etc."

## The Pentagon's Man in From the Cold

Written by

Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17 - Last Updated Monday, 21 August 2006 12:17

---

Because if only for self-enlightened interest, you have to remember, folks, that there are 1.3 billion Muslims out there and they are watching this every night on Al Jazeera and some of the other Middle Eastern outlets and they are mightily, mightily disturbed at this. And the actions of our government have put our position in the Middle East and in other Muslim countries back to the likes of when we did the crusades.

Dahr Jamail: Next week, McGovern discusses US policy regarding Iran, a US/Israel "mutual defense treaty" and the security ramifications for Israel.

---

**Dahr Jamail** is an independent journalist who has reported for the Guardian, the Independent, and the Sunday Herald. He now writes regularly for Inter Press Service and Truthout. He maintains a web site at [dahrjamailiraq.com](http://dahrjamailiraq.com).