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Col. Sam Gardiner on CNN, 9/18/06

BLITZER: How likely is the U.S. strike against Iran? And would it lead to all-out war? Joining us now is retired U.S. Air Force colonel Sam Gardiner. He has taught strategy and military operations at the National War College, the Air War College, and the Naval War College. Colonel thanks very much for coming in. He just prepared a paper for the Century Foundation entitled “Considering the U.S. Military Option For Iran.” You speak to a lot of people plugged in. What is your bottom line? How close in your opinion is the Bush Administration to giving that go ahead.

GARDINER: It’s been given. In fact, we’ve probably been executing military operations inside Iran for at least 18 months. The evidence is overwhelming

BLITZER: Wait. Wait. Let me press you.

GARDINER: Sure.

BLITZER: When you say it’s been given. The president says he wants diplomacy to work to convince the Iranian government to stop enriching uranium, not go forward. “I would tell the Iranian people that we have no desire for conflict.” He told David Ignatius of the Washington Post the other day. So what does that mean, the order has been given?

GARDINER: We are conducting military operations inside Iran right now. The evidence is overwhelming. From both the Iranians, Americans, and from congressional sources.

BLITZER: What is “military operation?” Define that.

GARDINER: Sure. They probably have had two objectives going back 18 months. The first was to gather intelligence. Where is the Iranian nuclear program? The second has been to prepare dissident groups for phase two which will be the strike, which will come as the next phase, I think.

BLITZER: Preparing intelligence, that’s understandable using all sorts of means. They want to know what the Iranians are up to in terms of their nuclear program. But are you suggesting that U.S. military forces, special operations forces, or others are on the ground right now in Iran.

GARDINER: Yes, sir. Certainly. Absolutely clear the evidence is overwhelming from lots of sources, and, again, most of them you can read in the public. Seymore Hersch has done good work on it. There are lots of other people who have done that. I have talked to Iranians. I asked an Iranian ambassador to the IAEA, what’s this I hear about Americans being there? He said to me, well, we’ve captured some people who worked with them. We’ve confirmed that they’re there.

BLITZER: Yeah, but, you know, these guys — the Iranians, you can't necessarily believe what they're saying. They could arrest some dissidents in Iran and say these are American spies. They do that all the time.

GARDINER: Sure. Sure. The House Committee on Emerging Threats tried to have a hearing some weeks ago in which they asked the Department of State and Defense to come and answer this question because it's serious enough to be answered without congressional approval, and they didn't come to the hearing. There are sources that I have talked to on the Hill who believe that that's true and that it's being done without congressional oversight.

BLITZER: Look, I was once a Pentagon correspondent many years ago, and in those days and in these days, as Jamie McIntire just reported, and as you well know from your time in active duty in the Pentagon, in the U.S. military, these guys are planning contingency operations for almost everything. If Canada goes to war against the United States, they have a contingency plan.

GARDINER: Okay, two differences. Number one, we have learned from TIME Magazine today that some U.S. naval forces had been alerted for deployment. That is a major step. That's first. Second thing is the sources suggest the plan that's not in the Pentagon. The plan has gone to the White House. That's not normal planning. When the plan goes to the White House, that means we've gone to a different state.

BLITZER: You think it's possible there is a little psychological warfare being played on Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to rattle him. To spread the word. To put out this kind of information. To get him nervous, perhaps a little bit more agreeable to the diplomatic option.

GARDINER: It's possible. It's also possible that this path was selected a long time ago. You recall that even before Gulf II that a time when the president said we have no plan. I have no plan on my desk. In the summer of 2002 we began bombing Iraq. Operation Southern Focus, without congressional approval, without the U.N. sanctions, we went ahead and began bombing.

BLITZER: The argument at that time is if there were violations of the no-fly zone, U.S. war planes were flying in the north and the south and there were rockets or anti-aircraft fire going up, they could take those out.

GARDINER: Yes, but it was a campaign to begin the war before the war began. You know, I would suggest the evidence is there.

BLITZER: You see a similar pattern right now.

GARDINER: Exactly.

BLITZER: We're going to follow this closely. Colonel Sam Gardener, thank you very much. We look forward to reading your report that the Century Foundation is putting out as well.

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1. And after that Syria, North Korea. Seriously. How many people have to die for GeeDub to feel like a man?

Comment by Jason — September 18, 2006 @ [7:27 pm](#)

2. “In the summer of 2002 we began bombing Iraq. Operation Southern Focus, without congressional approval, without the U.N. sanctions, we went ahead and began bombing.”

In reading reports of the war games and war plans on Iran over several months now and in various publications, there should be a high degree of skepticism and challenge to the White House on this. After the debacle that is Iraq, it is unconscionable that the White House would secretly involve us in another operation.

Comment by Marie — September 18, 2006 @ [7:34 pm](#)

3. oh...my...god... can no one leash that summabitch.... Honestly do the republicans really think that another war will allow them to keep congress and the house? I mean the other two wars are going so well????? I look forward to the day this cabal is in chains in front of a war crimes tribunal...sigh... one can dream

Comment by shiobhan — September 18, 2006 @ [7:51 pm](#)

4. If this is correct, just how is this different from any other preventive war? Ask the Zulus. They were invaded by the British in 1879 because they might, someday in the future, pose a threat. If correct, this plan is totally immoral. The radical Moslems have the same right to take down the USA, because, in their eyes, we pose a future threat. Bush is immoral and evil, and he and Cheney need to be removed from office and prosecuted as the war criminals they are.

Comment by PinHouston — September 18, 2006 @ [7:56 pm](#)

5. If indeed we are already executing a phase one of yet another war, then the President is yet again violating the US Constitution.

As written above, “we pose a future threat.” and as a threat, those countries that can will resist our efforts. It is not clear what they will not do to prevent us from penetrating further into formerly Muslim territories.

If Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq join forces with Iran and Syria, we will be in deep, dark waters.

–UB.

Comment by unclebucky — September 18, 2006 @ [8:58 pm](#)

6. And will the October surprise come in the form of a mushroom cloud, over Tehran?

Remember, Bush has not ruled out the use of nuclear weapons. And under the War Powers Act, Bush has pretty much free reign for 90 days to use the military however he sees fit before having to report to Congress.

Comment by Briseadh na Faire — September 18, 2006 @ [10:36 pm](#)

7. Go Bush.

GLASS PARKING LOT!

Comment by [CC](#) — September 18, 2006 @ [10:40 pm](#)

8. GLASS PARKING LOT!

Comment by [CC](#) — September 18, 2006 @ [10:40 pm](#)

9. The reason why Republicans will keep both the House and Senate is because there will be no election! After Bush bombs Iran (the October Surprise), the global Shia community will declare war on the US. Gas prices will soar to \$200/barrel, American soldiers in Iraq will be slaughtered by the hundreds if not thousands, and moderate friendly Muslim nations like Jordan, Egypt and Saudia Arabia will see their gov'ts overthrown. Citing "grave national security" concerns, Bush will cancel the election.

Wanna bet?

Comment by Tom Parks — September 18, 2006 @ [10:49 pm](#)

10. Their wet dreams are the nation's nightmare and will be for the children for decades.

Comment by [Vinilo-Suave](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [12:16 am](#)

11. All you whiners can thank your spineless UN for most of the current situations around the world. They all want to pat themselves on the back when they come up with some worthless compromise to appease some country or radical group that has sworn death to western civilization, but never have the backbone to actually follow up on any of the sanctions or threats of renewed military action. It is a corrupt US-hating organization that continues to empower those that would do us harm. And, if you want someone to thank for how Iran is dealing with us today... go thank Mr. Undermine the US & Prove to everyone I am still a pansy who will run from any fight - Former President Jimmy Carter, who was the first US President that proved to Iran and other Muslim nations that if you have enough ultra libs and self-loathing democrats in the US, and UN to back you up, that you can take hostages, openly support terrorist organizations, process materials for weapons of mass destruction, announce on the world stage that you wish to wipe israel off the map, and deal with other countries/groups that have pubically announced their intentions to do anyone and everyone in the US harm. Remember my little peacenik, self & US loathing citizens Terrorist bombs and attacks don't differentiate between bleeding-heart liberals and ultra-conservative bible-thumpers. They want to kill us all. It does not matter if GW or Slick Willie is in office. Whether there is a Democrat or Republican controlled House or Senate. Wake up smell the coffee and get some pride back into being an American. In any of these countries you would pander to have appeased, you would be jailed/possibly kiled for the comments you left above. And if you are one of those that swore to leave the US if GW got elected, and haven't

left yet... your late. Take yourself off to Iran, and don't forget to take Alec Baldwin with you.

Comment by [common sense](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [3:01 am](#)

12. Looks like it's time to stock up on emergency cash, food, gas and medicine. Think about what life will be like for an indefinite period when the oil is cut off by the offended OPEC countries.

Comment by [Monkey boy](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [7:35 am](#)

13. Wow, so all I have to do is be proud of America and all will be right in the world? LOL

I have a better idea, common sense. How about YOU leave the US and take that war mongering terrorist creating el pretzeldente with you. Go to some third world nation where the people are used to dictatorship. Easy pickins for evil leaders who prefer world dominance over common sense diplomacy.

Comment by [proud progressive](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [7:46 am](#)

14. There's no **common sense** in empowering the Shias in Iraq when you have a problem with the Shias that rule Iran, so if you want common sense start with your beloved president Bush !!!

Comment by [Manuel](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [9:06 am](#)

15. Age of enlistment is 42, "Common Sense". Take YOURSELF to Iran.

I'm also sick of neocons stating that Jimmy Carter did nothing with regards to military action and trying to recover the hostages. It dishonors the eight soldiers that lost their lives in a sandstorm, when Carter ordered a special ops rescue mission to retrieve the hostages in Tehran.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/25/newsid_2503000/2503899.stm

And at least he had the guts to take full responsibility.

But, you'd rather give him a blanket "appeaser" title and stomp of the graves of those men. Way to be an American, CS- alway Party before Country, right?

Comment by [Chimpin ain't easy](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [10:08 am](#)

16. So wait, none of you has bothered to find a way to be energy indipendent? I did, Solar electric, heat and hot water, ground water cooling for the AC and well water. Also have myself a nice little garden (Anyone from WWII era will tell you need only about 9sq ft to grow enough food for most of the year) (I have about a half acre plus fruit trees, I hunt and have chickens and goats). I telecommute most days and drive a deasel motercycle most of the rest of the time (150mpg). (Although I do own a big pickup truck and a nice car I only use them when I need the space or the weather is bad)

All of this stuff worries you, libs and reps. because you failed to see the writing on the wall in the 70s and just continued to by more and more expensive houses and need more and more power, larger and larger cars and SUVs that need more and more gas. We wouldn't have this problem today if only 50% of the country had woke up then and do something about it.

We don't give a crap what happens in Africa because they have nothing we need, same would be true for the middle east if all of you, blue and red, started thinking about how to save gas and power. How to become energy independant.

The libs really want to complain about the enviroment and us going after oil in the middle east but block things like nuke power and oil drilling. instead of finding clean ways to stop needing it so much. The Reps want to keep the businesses going to work toward getting more oil instead of finding something else to do.

You all suck and it's all of Americas fault. I did my part, when are the rest of you going to do theirs?

Comment by [The cenobyte](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [10:29 am](#)

17. Cycles come and go. There is always a pattern to man's activities on earth. Humans are creatures of habit and a great many of man's habits are negative and selfish. They always have been and they always will and will not cease until humans cease. Democracy and Communism, Catholics and Protestants, Shia and Sunni, European against European, European against African, African against African, Disadvantaged against the Upper Class, etc, etc, etc. The profound element in all of this is the nuclear option which man has taken, selfish individuals that they are. They are not just content to destroy one another but risk destroying other creatures and organisms on the earth as well. Total destruction has happened before, many many times. Civilisations come and go. The present is no different than the past. From the end comes new beginnings. Hopefully without the spectre of HUMAN supremacy next time.

Comment by [Crusaders & Jihadhists](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [10:42 am](#)

18. It's about time we go into Iran!! Hail the greatest Commander-n-Chief this country has EVER known!!! Repeal the 22nd Amendment VOTE BUSH 2008!!

Comment by [Greg](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [5:39 pm](#)

19. What is wrong with you liberal morons???
- Do you want your families exterminated and their heads cut off ??
- Islam is set to take over the world by 2030 and are hopeful that the date can be revised upwards. IF everyone does not convert to Islam;They will be exterminated.We can then wear Islamic clothing,beat or kill our wives and children,join in the extermination of Israel and pray to a psudo madman like Mohamed.
- Bush is saving our lives.You people need to grow up and face reality.
- You cannot negotiate with Islamic terrorism.
- Use your God given brains and get a life for you and your families,and I really mean A LIFE.

Comment by [Norm James](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [8:57 am](#)

20. I saw this interview. Wolf Blitzer was very uncomfortable with what Gardiner was saying especially when the implications that President Bush's assertions about diplomacy being paramount were being contradicted by Col. Gardiner.

After the interview ended, Blitzer turned to celebrity Newshead, Jaimie McIntyre, and asked whether

he had any evidence to back up the claims of Gardiner. McIntyre, who claimed to be a friend of Col. Gardiner, looked befuddled but stated unequivocally that “there is absolutely no evidence to back up the claims of Col. Gardiner.” This seemed to have a calming effect on Wolf Blitzer who then turned to other matters.

McIntyre did not say what investigation he had done to have proven the non-existence of any evidence. No mention of Pentagon interviews, refutations by experts, etc. The impression I got was that McIntyre was there solely for plausible denial or cover. He never mentioned the reporting done on this by Sy Hersh and others.

Great journalism it wasn't.

Comment by [Chick Dante'](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [11:00 am](#)

21. [...] More [...]

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