

CONDI'S PISSING CONTEST WITH MOQTADA AL-SADR

Siun and Spencer make what I believe to be the most important point about Condi's taunt of Moqtada al-Sadr.

"I know he's sitting in Iran," Rice said dismissively, when asked about al-Sadr's latest threat to lift a self-imposed cease-fire with government and U.S. forces. "I guess it's all-out war for anybody but him," Rice said. "I guess that's the message; his followers can go [to] their deaths and he's in Iran."

Here's Siun:

Hmmm ... am I missing something here? Aside from the fact that it is only the U.S. military that keeps claiming al Sadr is always in Iran, I had not noticed the redeployment of the Bush White House and State Department to the streets of Iraq. Occasional drop-ins at the Green Zone, less occasional speed tours of locations outside the GZ (complete with air cover and hundreds of military escorts), sure, but ... when did George and Condi move to Baghdad?

And here's Spencer:

So Sadr is a coward for making threats from Iran... and Condoleezza Rice is a stateswoman for blustering Sadr into making a move that carries the potential of killing American soldiers. Why is this woman respected again?

Once again, this Administration's claims of manlihood are so much empty fluff.

But I'd like to point out something else about Condi's taunt. Back when Dick Cheney snuck off to Iraq to meet with Nuri al-Maliki, it remained unclear whether or not Cheney's visit had some causal relationship with what came next: Maliki's ill-fated offensive into Basra. It seemed like a pretty telling coincidence, but the Administration barely admitted the US was providing air support, much less admit that Dick at least approved—if not incited—the offensive.

I submit we will have no doubts about what comes next. Condi has made it very clear she owns—we own—whatever atrocities are about to happen in Sadr City.

Update: Here's Scarecrow making the same point. He also notes that, by inciting more civil war, the US seems to be engaging in an effort to further empower Iran.

The Administration wanted this fight, and Petraeus' first duty is to protect the Green Zone from rocket attacks. His only tactical complaint was his claim – which now appears disingenuous – that the Iraqis tried to move against Basra before US forces were ready. He blamed al Maliki's impatience for the initial stumbles, but as soon as the offensive stalled, the Americans (and British) bailed out the Iraq Army with their fire power and embedded forces. The offensive now appears to be succeeding in establishing Iraq Army control of Basra, due in part to the Iranians, who arranged al-Sadr's withdrawal and seem willing to have the Government in control of Southern Iraq.

There have been other reports that suggest Iran is willing to allow the al-Maliki government to consolidate control, preferring that to the less controllable – by Iran – elements of Sadr's more nationalist militia. That means the Bush Administration and John McCain are engaged in a massive bait and

switch about who we're fighting and why.

[snip]

With McCain's nonsense providing the cover (reinforced by the Pentagon's propagandists embedded in the media), US forces are providing the critical military difference in a civil war to solidify the political and military power of the most pro-Iranian elements in Iraq – the parties of al-Maliki and his Shia allies – all of whose leaders have strong ties to Iran. But by identifying al-Sadr's resistance fighters in Sadr City with Iran, and attributing US deaths to Iranian weapons and Iranian trained fighters, (recall Lieberman's questions to Petraeus) Bush and McCain are unmistakably keeping the door open for a possible military strike against Iran.