

SIX DAYS to WAR

NewsMax contributor Kenneth R. Timmerman, author of *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran*, contemplates the swift deadlines and unintended consequences of a U.S. counterattack against an increasingly militant Iran.



Military leaders and intelligence analysts who for years have been gaming various war scenarios involving Iran say they all have something in common — none ends well for the United States.

The reason: Despite U.S. air superiority, the conflicts almost inevitably escalate to a region-wide war. And if the intelligence estimate that Iran does not possess nuclear weapons is wrong, then the war quickly goes nuclear with nightmarish results (see “The Nightmare Scenario” on Page 63.)

Sources for this scenario, which represents only one course a conflict with Iran might take, include top Israeli intelligence officers, as well as military and political leaders interviewed in Israel and Washington, D.C.

An Iranian source provided NewsMax with a key planning document developed by the Strategic Studies Center of the Iranian navy that spells out how Iran would repel a U.S. attack. No other publication is known to have analyzed Iranian military moves based on this information.

This projection assumes that the Iranians, having witnessed the devastating U.S. military assault in



neighboring Iraq, will not wait passively as the U.S. Air Force dismantles its defenses, but rather will launch a pre-emptive spoiling attack to catch the Americans off balance.

DAY ONE: MONDAY
0010 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)
(3:10 a.m. local time at al-Hillah, Iraq)

American and allied forces launch a surprise nighttime raid on an Iranian operational headquarters just south of Baghdad, killing six Iranians and capturing 20. Among the Iranians captured is a top-ranking intelligence officer from the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Also seized: A computer that serves as a key-cipher machine used for all coded communications between the Iraq-based networks and IRGC headquarters in Tehran.

DAY TWO: TUESDAY
2100 GMT (11:30 p.m. at Tehran, Iran)

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei convenes his top advisers and the 15-member Strategic and Intelligence Affairs Commission he established in mid-January, calling them to his residence in Jamharian, in north Tehran. The mood is grim in the large underground conference room.

Khamenei learns that his military experts estimate the Americans will strike within the next 48 hours. “If we strike now,” his officers tell him, “we can cut off the head of the cobra — before it strikes us.”

After a brief discussion led by Khamenei’s son, Mojtaba, and his chief of staff, the cancer-stricken supreme leader turns to the IRGC intelligence chief.

“What if we do nothing?” he asks.
“Then the game is up,” says Gen. Morteza Rezaei.
“We have two days, perhaps three if the Americans

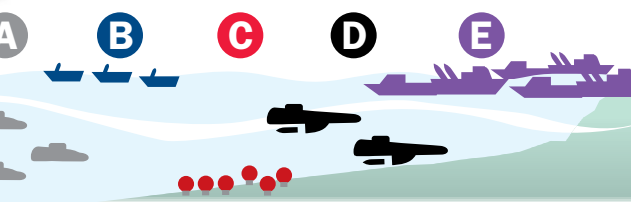
The Iranian Arsenal

Iran’s Middle East neighbors are increasingly nervous about its military buildup, and its intentions. The thicket of Iranian missiles and naval bases that are strategically positioned near the vulnerable Strait of Hormuz help explain why.

SCUD-type Mobile Launchers	Silkworm C-802 Batteries	IRGC Naval Bases	Chemical/Biohazard Weaponry
Long-range Shahab-4 Missile Launch Sites	Ballistic Missile Launch Silos (Biohazard Weapons)	Early Warning/Command and Control Satellites	Nuclear Weaponry or Nuclear Production Sites

U.S. ships entering the Persian Gulf will have to contend with Iran’s layered naval defenses. Forward attackers are small submarines, manned by suicide crews (A), flanked by swarms of small, but heavily armed speedboats (B). Rows of deadly bottom-tethered, rocket-propelled mines (C) form an offshore perimeter. Kilo class submarines (D) and missile boats built by China and France (E) provide the last line of defense.

Iran’s Amphibious Assault



are stupid, before they roll up all of our networks, expose our operations to the world, and turn the Persian Gulf into an American lake. We must use them or lose them," he says.

Fearful that their regime will be toppled following a devastating U.S. attack, all 15 members of the commission urge Khamenei to activate the military plan to spoil the American attack. Reluctantly, Khamenei agrees to strike.



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY

0730 GMT (9:30 a.m. at Baghdad, Iraq)

Huge car bombs explode in the open-air al-Karada market, a Sunni area of Baghdad, and in Sadr City, the heart of Baghdad's Shia slums. Minutes later, more bombs explode in Fallujah, and in the Shiite holy city of Karbala. More than 400 people die in the most extensive carnage of the insurgency.

1035 GMT (1:05 p.m. at Strait of Hormuz)

A Royal Dutch Shell supertanker is

struck by two Chinese-made C-802 missiles as it enters the Persian Gulf after exiting the narrow shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz. The missiles appear to have been fired from a cave on Greater Tunb Island, which sits in the middle of the shipping lanes.

1047 GMT (2:17 p.m. at Strait of Hormuz)

Two smaller tankers, registered in Panama and owned by a German shipping line, hit floating mines off Oman's Musandam Peninsula, partially blocking the main commercial sea lane through the Strait of Hormuz.

1512 GMT (7:12 p.m. at Gulf of Oman)

The USS *Antietam*, a guided-missile cruiser attached to the USS *John C. Stennis* carrier battle group, comes to the aid of the burning tankers from its station in the Gulf of Oman. As it enters the Strait of Hormuz, so close to Iran's shores that the crew can see the lights of hillside villages, the ship is hit by a rocket-propelled bottom-tethered mine. The explosion is so powerful that it knocks everyone on the bridge off their feet.

Within minutes, the ship begins to list. Capt. Richard T. Rushton issues a mayday call and orders his sailors to abandon ship. As the first lifeboats hit the water, a dozen speedboats materialize out of the darkness and open fire with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Twenty-five U.S. sailors perish before gun crews on the *Antietam* return to stations and pick off the Iranian attack boats, using their twin rapid-fire 20-millimeter Phalanx gun systems. As they continue to fire at the Iranians, a second rocket-propelled mine strikes the ship from below, opening a 30-foot gash below the waterline.

In less than five minutes, the *Antietam* sinks, taking the lives of all 33 officers, 25 chief petty officers, and approximately 312 enlisted men and women remaining on board.

1645 GMT (11:45 a.m. at Washington, D.C.)

Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell, a retired vice admiral, arrives at the White House Situation Room to brief President Bush and his top advisers. Others present: Stephen Hadley, Bush's national security adviser, National Security Council Middle East expert Elliot Abrams, Vice President Dick Cheney

and national security assistant John Hannah. With their unanimous approval, the president decides to unleash

Operation Clean Slate, the Pentagon's long-standing military plan to disrupt and destroy Iran's operational networks in Iraq.

But first, they agree that the president must address the nation and deliver his ultimatum to Iran.

1745 GMT (7:45 p.m. at Damascus, Syria)

Iranian Intelligence Minister Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei and Rezai arrive at a villa on the outskirts of Damascus, where they are met by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. They order him to unleash Iran's rocket and missile arsenal in Lebanon against military and civilian targets in Israel.

DAY FOUR: THURSDAY

0100 GMT (8 p.m., Wednesday at Washington, D.C.)

Speaking from the Oval Office, Bush addresses the nation in a televised address. "Today, America has come under attack from the Islamic Republic of Iran." After describing the attacks in Baghdad, and the loss of the USS *Antietam*, Bush gives Iran's leaders 48 hours to comply with the demands of the international community to suspend its nuclear programs, as expressed in three



Mike McConnell



Hassan Nasrallah

outstanding United Nations Security Council resolutions. Bush concludes: "One day, I hope to welcome here in the Oval Office the leaders of an independent and sovereign Iran, free of tyranny, free of absolute clerical rule, and free of terror. May God bless America, and God bless the free people of Iran."

0506 GMT (7:06 a.m. at Haifa, Israel)

Air raid sirens go off in Haifa as 46 rockets launched from Lebanon slam into Israel's third-largest city, and its largest port. Three rockets hit Rambam hospital; more than a dozen slam into the city's sprawling industrial center, setting huge oil tanks on fire and severely damaging the Haifa Chemicals plant.

0516 GMT (7:16 a.m. at Tel Aviv, Israel)

For the first time since 1948, air raid sirens go off in Tel Aviv. Four medium-range Zelzal missiles, apparently fired from Christian areas of Lebanon allied with Hezbollah, slam into a shopping mall on Ditzengoff Street, killing more than 40 commuters. A fifth missile lands close to the newly built glass high-rise complex at the Kirya, Israel's defense ministry.

0930 GMT (4:30 a.m. at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri)

Fifteen bat-wing B-2 Spirit stealth bombers take off before dawn for the 20-hour flight to Iran. At the final refueling station, over Iraq, the wing commander will receive his final "go/no-go" orders from Bush. Each B-2 is loaded with up to 40,000 pounds of conventional bunker-busting munitions.

1300 GMT (9 a.m. at New York)

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Javad Zarif, protests what he calls "an unprovoked attack on Iran's sovereignty" and declares that Iran is invoking its sovereign right under Chapter 7, Article 51, to take all necessary actions for its self-defense. "We have been attacked by the forces of global arrogance," he says, using a term fre-

The Nightmare Scenario

Current scenarios on eliminating Iran's nuclear capability all hinge on the critical assumption that the Islamic Republic does not already possess nuclear weaponry.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other sources, Iran is believed to be at least a year away from developing nuclear arms.

Yet North Korea was also thought to have moth-balled its nuclear program following a 1994 agreement with the United States. In 2002, however, it admitted it had secretly continued enrichment, and then tested a nuclear weapon last year.

The nightmare scenario: What if Iran *already has* nuclear weapons, and its regime decides to use them when threatened?

"We have no doubt Iran has a clandestine nuclear weapons program in addition to the programs they have declared to the IAEA," a top Israeli intelligence official tells NewsMax.

We asked one top Israeli intelligence official what happens, now or in the future, if Iran launches a strike against Israel with nuclear-armed missiles.

"Then," he said bluntly, "all bets are off."



Javad Zarif

quently employed by Iran's leaders to designate the United States. "Therefore, we are entitled under international law to strike against our attackers wherever we find them."

1306 GMT (3:06 p.m. at Jerusalem, Israel)

The Israeli Cabinet meets in emergency session. All day long, Israel's air force has prowled Lebanon's skies, hunting for Hezbollah rocket launchers. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, stung by criticism for



Ehud Olmert

not having responded forcefully to the Hezbollah attacks in July 2006, has no choice but to order the full mobilization of Israeli reserve forces for a ground assault into Lebanon. He also authorizes the air force to prepare to strike nuclear and missile sites in Iran.

1450 GMT, Thursday (9:50 a.m. at Washington, D.C.)

Bush, Cheney, and Hadley enter the Situation Room for a videoconference with Lt. Gen. David Petraeus in Baghdad, where it is now 4:50 p.m.

Petraeus has bad news for the president. Four more oil tankers have been hit in the Strait of Hormuz, and commercial shipping has now come to a standstill. Three dozen tankers are now queued up in the Gulf of Oman, beyond Iranian missile range, unable to load their oil.

Moreover, since the car bomb attacks of the prior morning, Sunni and Shia militias have gone on a rampage. The situation in Baghdad is "out of control," Petraeus says.

The president conveys the unanimous decision of his national security advisers and the Cabinet to launch the Iraq-based portion of Operation Clean Slate to roll up the Iranian networks.

"Don't shy from hitting the resupply bases on the Iranian side of the border," Bush says. "We have to send a strong message. The Iranians must not doubt our resolve."

1500 GMT (10 a.m. at New York)

In less than one hour of trading on world exchanges, oil prices jump to more than \$200 a barrel. Airline stocks, manufacturers, and retailers plummet, as energy stocks soar. Gold tops \$800 an ounce. The euro rises to an all-time high, fetching \$1.46.

1515 GMT (10:15 a.m. at Washington, D.C.) Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke calls



Lt. Gen. David Petraeus

U.S. Gathers Forces for Possible Strike

In mid-February, the USS *John Stennis* joined the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and its strike group in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman region — bringing more than 144 U.S. fighter-bombers within striking distance of the Strait of Hormuz and key Iranian military bases and nuclear weapons sites.

In addition, an Expeditionary Assault Group spearheaded by the USS *Boxer* is already in the region. Besides the tremendous firepower of its major assault vessels and submarines, it includes amphibious landing ships and hovercraft capable of landing a Marine Expeditionary Unit anywhere on Iran's shores.

United States naval vessels will not be sailing those troubled seas alone. Britain has announced that it is sending two minesweepers, HMS *Blyth* and HMS *Ramsey*, to beef up naval forces in the Persian Gulf that are committed to keeping open commercial shipping lanes through the strategic Strait of Hormuz in the event of war.

Former director of national intelligence John Negroponte says that Iran should now officially be considered a "threat" to Arab Gulf states. □



The USS *Boxer* amphibious assault ship enters the Gulf.



The missile cruiser USS *Antietam's* control room.



F-117 stealth fighters would lead a U.S. attack.

U.S. War Power and Technology

From stealth fighters to aircraft carriers to special forces, U.S. forces will dominate any war in the Gulf region.



F-16 fighters use fly-by-wire control systems.



The F-22 Raptor is able to strike while yet unseen.



Waves of F-18 Hornets will launch from aircraft carriers.

Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Chris Cox. The two agree that to maintain the financial stability of America's markets, they must temporarily shut down stock, currency, and commodities exchanges around the country. They also agree to ask the president to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to help stabilize the markets.



Ben Bernanke

1530 GMT (10:30 a.m., Philadelphia)

Citgo service stations, owned by the government of Venezuela run by President Hugo Chavez, put up huge signs that announce: "NO WAR FOR OIL." Moveon.org announces it will hold a giant "March Against War" in the nation's capital on Saturday morning, busing in supporters from 30 states.

1600 GMT (7 p.m., Gulf of Oman)

Rear Adm. Kevin Quinn, commander of the USS *John C. Stennis* carrier strike group, orders Carrier Air Wing 9 into action. F/A-18C Hornet and F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike aircraft, assisted by E-2C Hawkeye command-and-control aircraft, repeatedly attack Silkworm missile sites, coastal artillery, and Scud launch sites at Jask, Sirik, and Minab at the entry to the Persian Gulf. IRGC naval bases in Bandar Abbas and on Qeshm Island are also hit.

1730 GMT (7:30 p.m. at Manama, Bahrain)

Thousands of demonstrators in this predominantly Shiite city take to the streets. Shouting anti-American and anti-war slogans, they march toward the headquarters of the U.S. 5th Fleet, where two dozen lightly armed U.S. Marine guards attempt to keep them at bay.

1804 GMT (8:04 p.m. at the Persian Gulf)

The Iranian Kilo-class submarine Nuh 903 launches two Hoot torpedoes — believed to be an Iranian version of the Russian-built Shkval torpedo

— at the USS *Ramage*, a guided-missile destroyer deployed as part of Carrier Strike Group 8 (the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*) in international waters near the island of Abu Musa. One torpedo misses, but the second one hits the ship's main propeller, leaving the *Ramage* dead in the water.

2302 GMT (3:02 p.m. at Livermore, Calif.)

Scientists scatter in panic as mortar bombs and crude, homemade rockets slam into the multibillion-dollar National Ignition Facility on the campus of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, one of America's top nuclear weapons labs. A similar attack occurs 15 minutes later at Los Alamos National Nuclear Laboratory in New Mexico. The Pentagon later determines that the mortars terrorists used in the attacks were stolen from a National Guard armory in 1999.

DAY FIVE: FRIDAY

0155 GMT (3:55 a.m. at the Persian Gulf)

United States special operations forces board new-generation high-speed landing craft and disembark under cover of darkness from the USS *Comstock* (LSD 45), part of the powerful USS *Boxer* expeditionary strike force.

Separate commando teams speed through the night and successfully destroy Iranian missile launchers on the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Qeshm. No Americans are killed during the lightning-quick raids.

Once the special operations forces return to the USS *Comstock*, Rear Admiral Allen G. Myers, commander of the Carrier Strike Group spearheaded by the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, orders air attacks on Iranian naval bases on Qeshm Island and the port cities of Bandar Abbas and Bandar Khomeini.

In less than 45 minutes, U.S. warplanes sink or cripple more than a dozen major surface ships. Half of the Iranian navy is destroyed.

0800 GMT (12:30 p.m. at Tehran, Iran)

Anti-regime riots break out in Shiraz, Ahwaz, Sanandaj, and Tabriz, major cities not far from the Iraqi border. In Mashad, near the border with Afghanistan, conservative clerics meet in council and declare the Tehran government "haram," meaning un-Islamic.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calls them "heretic traitors in league with American crusaders."

He orders the Revolutionary Guards to send anti-riot troops to quell the disturbances, but learns they have only two trained battalions available — enough to put down the revolt in just two cities.



IRAN CRISIS

1500 GMT (10 a.m. at Washington, D.C.)

Former Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar, now a special envoy to the Saudi king, arrives at the White House to meet with Bush. Bandar pleads with the president to act.

"You cannot continue to delay, Mr. President," Bandar says. "The Iranians have missiles pointed at our refineries. They have terrorist networks among the Shiites in the oil fields of our eastern province. If they knock out Abqaiq, the

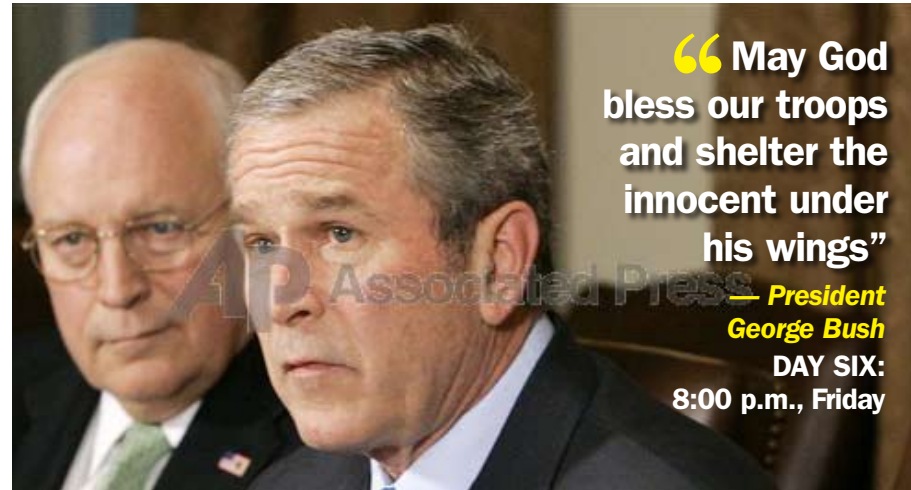


Prince Bandar

biggest refinery in the world, it could take us months or even years to recover production capacity. You've got to hit Iran's centers of power now, Mr. President. These fanatics must go, or all of us in the Persian Gulf region will become Iranian vassals."

1605 GMT (6:05 p.m. at Baghdad, Iraq)

More than 80 Iranian Oghab missiles rain down on U.S. bases at Baghdad International Airport, Bilad Air Base, and Tajji from launch sites just inside Iran, killing dozens of U.S. soldiers and



“May God bless our troops and shelter the innocent under his wings”

— President George Bush
DAY SIX:
8:00 p.m., Friday

damaging 23 U.S. military aircraft on the ground. Thirty minutes later, more missiles slam into Ali Al Salam Air Base in Kuwait, destroying eight Kuwaiti F/A-18s on the ground.

DAY SIX: SATURDAY

0100 GMT (8 p.m., Friday at Washington, D.C.)

"We have worked tirelessly with our partners at the United Nations and elsewhere to convince Iran's leaders to comply with their obligations under international treaties," Bush says in a nationally televised Oval Office address. "But instead, Iran's leaders have chosen war."

After recounting Iran's attacks over the past several days, the president confirms that the deadline for his 48-hour ultimatum has expired. "May God bless our troops," he says, "and shelter the innocent under his wings."

0530 GMT (7:30 a.m. at Natanz, Iran)

Out of the bright morning sky in central Iran, midway between Tehran and Isfahan, precision-guided bunker-busting conventional bombs fired from American B-2 Spirit stealth bombers rocket through 24 feet of reinforced concrete into empty production halls at Iran's declared uranium-enrichment facility at Natanz. A dozen Iranian workers at Natanz enrichment facility are

killed during the American attack. The B-2s also hit a uranium-conversion facility in Isfahan, and what appears to be a barren hillside outside the town of Behbahan, located in some 30 miles to the south of Natanz.

Within minutes of the attack at Behbahan, hundreds of IRGC soldiers swarm over the hillside.

Caterpillar bulldozers are brought onto the scene, and a massive rescue effort is launched to evacuate workers from the secret underground facility that now is in ruins.

In separate attacks, F-22s and F-117s attack and destroy the Busheir nuclear power reactor. A second attack targets the former U.S. Embassy, which is now a headquarters building for the IRGC.

Rioters in Tabriz and Shiraz seize control of local government offices. An opposition alliance of local businessmen, dissident IRGC officers, and lower-level government officials, declares a provisional government.

0700 GMT (9:30 a.m. at Hamadan, Iran)

The United States detects the launch of three missiles from an unknown site in western Iran. Within seconds, computers determine that the three missiles, carrying unknown payloads, are headed toward the Israeli-controlled sectors of Jerusalem.

0712 GMT (8:12 a.m. at Rosh Hanikra, Israel)

An Israeli Sea Pine early-warning radar picks up the three incoming Iranian missiles and transmits firing coordinates to an Arrow missile-defense battery located to the south, near Haifa. The Israeli Arrows automatically engage the Iranian missiles. Luckily, the Arrows destroy the three missiles before they cross Israel's border.

0900 GMT (10 a.m. at Jerusalem, Israel)

Thousands of Israelis carrying banners gather outside Olmert's official residence, demanding that he destroy Iran or resign. "What if they had launched four?" one sign reads.

1230 GMT (7:30 a.m. at Washington, D.C.)

Bush phones Olmert from the Oval Office, urging restraint. "We have massive attacks under way against Iranian nuclear, missile, and command centers," he informs Olmert. "There is nothing that Israel can contribute at this point. But there is much harm you could do by intervening."

"What do I tell my own people, Mr. President?" Olmert asks forlornly. "What do I tell my people?"

1900 GMT (9:30 p.m. at Tehran)

A drumbeat of U.S. airstrikes pummel Iranian command-and-control centers, nuclear sites, airfields, early-warning radar, and IRGC bases. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians march in Tehran's streets demanding peace. "America is not the enemy — Khamenei is," one sign reads.

By midnight, all U.S. special ops forces have returned safely. Although the global economy has taken a beating, Iran's missile and nuclear programs are decimated, its top clerics and IRGC officers are fleeing the country, and the Islamic Republic of Iran appears to be teetering on the verge of collapse. □

U.S. Air War: Watch Out for 'Big George'

Observers have been warning for three years of an impending U.S. military strike on Iran, while the Bush administration continues to insist it has no such intention.

U.S. air power is so massive, precise, and stealthy that it can effectively disarm Iran without

putting a single boot on the ground, according to retired Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney. A Fox News military analyst, McInerney calls his bunker-busting scenario "Big George."

In McInerney's war plan, 60 stealth aircraft would do the bulk of

the work, hitting some 1,200 targets.

Fifteen B-2 stealth bombers based in the United States, 35 F-117s based in the Mideast, and another 24 F-22s would carry out the initial waves of the attack, crippling Iran's long-range radar and strategic air defenses.

Each B-2 can carry eight 5,000-pound, bunker-busting bombs; or 16 bunker-busting bombs that weigh 2,000 pounds each; or 80 precision 500-pound munitions.

The B-2s would make the 20-hour flight to Iran from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, refuel-

ing over the Atlantic Ocean. Massive, follow-on waves of carrier-based F-18s, as well as F-15s and F-16s launching from ground bases throughout the Middle East, would take out Iran's known nuclear and missile sites.

Big George would also target

command-and-control facilities — Revolutionary Guards command centers, key clerics, and other regime-sensitive sites — in the hope of triggering a revolt against the clerical regime by opposition groups inside Iran.

McInerney, who helped plan the

1991 air campaign against Saddam Hussein, believes Big George would take just two days and would set back Iran's nuclear weapons program by at least five years.

Should the U.S. president choose this option, "I wouldn't be a confident Iranian," he says. □

