The Secretary for War -- *c'mon, that's what it is* -- has said "all options are on the table" regrding Iran, and has stated, in an almost-yawning aside, that Israel could attack in the spring.

It's a good time to ask: Anyone else got their hackles up? Anyone loopy on *deja vu?* Anybody got the bends, come up too fast from the depths, nitrogen bubbling away in their blood?

Anyone here got that swooning, sickly sensation, salmonella on steroids, those pangs shooting straight through you, those icy fingers stabbing right inside you, those waves slamming around in your stomach, all of a sudden, made up of a cold, greasy stew, or whatever it was got poured out of that soup pot, what in hell was it -- soured pea soup?

Well, no matter.

It's probably all just happenstance that all these slip-of-the-lip-secrets and self-important chest-beatings go on as they do, ticked up just a notch. Probably just luck that so many related things are going on in tandem, triple-bunked away down in steerage, all at the same time on this voyage, don't you think?

Our War Secretary has said the Israelis could strike in the sweet spot of time, while it was still so sweet, before Iran could make any preparations to shore-up its sites against any attacks.

Our President has said, and very definitively so, all options are on the table -- *always that damnable table, again*
-- and that we will not stand for a nuclear Iran,
not no way, not no how.

Hearing that familiar jingle-jangle of spurs again, that clump-clump of cowboy boots, echoing around in the marbled halls of our power?

The translation, as always, for those without programs: "Do it our way, and right away -- or we will club, you, hard and repeatedly, until you do."

Somehow, we manage to say these things with a smile, all the time. It is of absolutely no wonder, of course, the world flinches and moves away at our smiles, or nervously and automatically agrees, knowing we are sociopaths and psychotics, off our meds, off the reservation, no reservations at all. The world knows we are on the loose all over again -- a gigantic and towering idiot child, always testing its muscles, and now, currently in full fascination with hammers, with experimenting, with seeing nails everywhere.

Might Makes Right, and *Manifest Destiny*, and *We'll Steal All We Want -- All Fair and All Square From the Natives.* Who knew History itself has flashbacks, gets all woozy and trick-kneed, all weepy and maudlin, too?

* * * * *

Meanwhile, a big game of Risk is happening here, and the dies are all loaded, crooked as hell, all full up with lies.

The naval forces skitter this way and that, angling for best threat and advantage; promises of backing are made here and there, should any attempt be made to blockade oil shipment pinch-points, such as the Strait of Hormuz -- that pointy nub on the map between the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, in the waters, off the coast, just south of Iran.

Wiki tells us 20 percent of all the world's oil flows past here. It is the only sea passage -- the only one, hey, how about that? -- to the open ocean for large areas of the petroleum-exporting area. Iraq's just upstream, with Saudia Arabia and the UAE just across the way.

At its closest approach, the Strait is just 34 miles across -- half of a spider-strand's whisper of a width, as planetary measurements go, with those measurements in our time, for that Strait, fulling depicting for us all the straits we're all in. Those measurements, there, are doubly for our fitting, in advance, for a new, tighter-fitting, but eminently much smarter and snug, little, white

coat.

* * * * *

We addicts and mainliners of black gold, of those beloved fossil fuels, get very cranky and very alert -- as only junkies do -- when any hint of disruption of supply slithers through in our thoughts. It is then that all our attention drops and falls away from all else, that it plunges toward this one lifeline of a matter, and shoots right to the main event -- *we drop down on all fours with a painful thud in the ribs, we get down and get dirty, we must get pretty crude.*

In the backs of our minds, we think we hear music.

And, the music of oil, as everyone knows, is such sweet hurdy-gurdy in all our ears, even as we leap around, long-tailed, tight-suited, little caps on our heads, clutching tin cups -- held out for more, please -- while someone, whoever it is that's cranking away at that miserable and confounded tune, keeps pulling on our chains, all the time, keeps pulling away.

* * * * *

Change of scene, now: A tumbleweed, a ghost town, a saloon door flapping idly in a dust-devil's breeze -- you know the drill, you've been through here before.

Somewhere, in all the jingle-jangle of boot spurs and this rattletrap saber-rattling, there is some *mighty-weird*
dialogue popping up this time, and in subtext, straight from some post-apocalyptic, sci-fi western of sorts.

Now, there's some partially-space-suited cowpoke, gimping along, half-dragging a bum leg, alongside a sputtering mechanical mule, spittin' and sayin' somethin' odd:

Thems that gits thar fustest, they don' likes nobody new in they dang-nabbed ol' nukular clubhouse -- and that's a fact, Jack.

You're repelled of course, trying to jump back, to get out of this movie, to back up, to move out of this frame. But, you find you're in character, now, after so many years in this oily story -- and so, you can't help but to do your line, the show must go on, to pipe up and ask:

What is this -- some whacked-out range war, over somebody's grazing rights, over somebody else's watering hole?

Why, yes -- yes it is, if you really must know, stranger.

This here's all about grazin' on oil -- in vicinity of that waterin' spot, right over there, follow your eyes across that sand, no more tumblin' weeds here, just beyond that nub of land, right there, in the Strait of Hormuz.

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To be Continued -- tomorrow, most likely, we reckon.