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RUSSIA, IRAN AND WAR AGAINST ISRAEL

Tom's Perspectives

by Thomas Ice

It is very interesting what has been happening in Iran the last few years and especially since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has been elected President. Not only has Iran caused great concern among many world leaders with pursuit of a nuclear program but President Ahmadinejad has shown that he would know what to do with nuclear weapons if Iran is allowed to actually bring them on line. Virtually all geo-political experts believe that tense moments lie ahead as the world wonders what to do about this building threat. The United States and Israel are at the front of this crisis as they are the prime actors who must decide what they should do, if anything, about Iran's developing nuclear threat.

PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD

In the short few months that Ahmadinejad has been in office he has made a number of inflammatory anti-Semitic statements about Israel. He has said that Israel should be wiped off of the map. It is encouraging that he thinks Israel is on the map, most Islamic maps of the Middle East do not even have Israel on them instead they have Palestine. He added that Israel should be nuked. Later he said the Jews should leave their country and go back to Europe. He has even threatened to nuke the United States. All of this in a few short months since becoming Iran's President. Iran has become the most dangerous country in the world. Mart Zuckerman has summed up Iran's terror tantrum as follows:

> Iran today is the mother of Islamic terrorism. Tehran openly provides funding, training, and weapons to the world's worst terrorists, including Hezbollah, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and it has a cozy relationship with al Qaeda. It has given sanctuary to major al Qaeda terrorists, including senior military commander Saif al-Adel, three of Osama bin Laden's sons, and al Qaeda spokesman Suleiman Abu Ghaith. It supports many of the barbaric terrorists in Iraq who are murdering innocent civilians in order to destroy Iraq's fragile hold on democracy. Through its 900-mile border with Iraq, Iran is flooding its neighbor with money and fighters. It is infiltrating troublemakers into Afghanistan, supporting terrorism against Turkey, sustaining Syria, and had a hand in the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia.[1]

What is the mentality driving someone like Ahmadinejad? It has been noted: "In all his crazed pronouncements, Ahmadinejad reflects an end-of-days view: History is coming to its grand finale under his aegis."[2] What are some of the prophetic beliefs of this devout Muslim?

Within the Shiite Muslim tradition, which dominates Iran, an Imam is a spiritual leader who is said to be a bloodline descendant of the original prophet Muhammad. There was a prophecy about the coming of the twelfth Imam within Islam. "Imam Muhammad Abul Qasim (Al-Mahdi)(AS), the last in the line of the Twelve Ithna Ashari Imams was born on 15th Shabaan 255 Hijri in Samarra, Iraq. His father was the Eleventh Imam Hasan Al-Askari (AS) and his mother was Nargis Khatoon, grand daughter of the Emperor of Rum."[3] It is believed that the five-year old Muhammad

disappeared in A.D. 878 in the cave of the great mosque at Samarra without leaving progeny and that he will return near the end of the world.

> The Hidden Imam, . . . appear to the world of humanity. This return is the most significant event in the future for the Shiite faithful and has thunderous eschatological consequences. This return will occur shortly before the Final Judgment and the end of history. Imam Mahdi will return at the head of the forces of righteousness and do battle with the forces of evil in one, final, apocalyptic battle. When evil has been defeated once and for all, the Imam Mahdi will rule the world for several years under a perfect government and bring about a perfect spirituality among the peoples of the world. After the Imam Mahdi has reigned for several years, Jesus Christ will return . . .
>
> Twelver Shiism is, then, a deeply eschatological religion. Important to understanding Shia religious belief is the understanding that the end of time will be preceded by an era of perfect justice and spirituality. The world, for the Shiite, is a deeply immoral, degenerate, and corrupt place; these are the necessary preludes to the appearance of Imam Mahdi. Like Christianity, Shiism is also a deeply prophetic religion. Like Christian belief, the end of time and the appearance of the Mahdi will be preceded by a number of events foretold in prophecy. The Shiite, then, like many Christians, lives in a world full of signs of the impending concluding chapters of history. This is vitally important in understanding Shia culture and political theory. Most of Iranian history can only be understood in relationship to the Doctrine of Return and the prophecies associated with it. For instance, during the Iranian Revolution, several Iranians believed that Ayatullah Ruhollah Khumayni, the spiritual and theoretical head of the Revolution, was the Hidden Imam returned to the world of humanity. While Khumayni never admitted this, he never denied it either. In many ways, the Revolutionaries believed that they were engineering or inaugurating the beginning of the reign of justice in the world, just as the radical Protestant English who settled America believed that they were inaugurating the one thousand year rule of saints that would precede the end of the world. Contemporary Iranian politics can in no way be divorced from the fundamental religious tenets of Shia Islam.[4]

It is important to know that Ahmadinejad believes deeply in the prophetic outline of the twelfth Imam and believes that he is to do what he can to help bring about its fulfillment. This is why he spoke of the twelfth Imam in his United Nations speech. Ahmadinejad believes that the twelfth Imam will only return at a time when the world is in chaos, which accounts for why he appears to be fearless as he leads Iran toward the goal of obtaining nuclear weapons.

RUSSIA AND IRAN

Mart Zuckerman, editor *of U. S. News & World Report* has said, "Russian President Vladimir Putin, in an interview several years ago, criticized America's decision to go to war against Iraq and told me, "The real threat is Iran." He was right. But Russia has become part of the problem, not the solution."[5] It is no secret that Russia has played a role of enabler to Iran, which has risen to the top of the list of rogue states that threaten to bring great destabilization to the current world order. "And Russia has made the threat more real. It sold the nuclear power plant at Bushehr to Iran and contracted to

sell even more to bring cash into its nuclear industry. As one American diplomat put it, this business is a 'giant hook in Russia's jaw.'"[6] What? The American diplomat said, "this business is a 'giant hook in Russia's jaw.'" That's right, the diplomat used a phrase right out of Bible prophecy to describe Russia's current role with Iran.

The Battle of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is a prophecy about an attack upon the land of Israel led by Russian with a number of nations joining them, (Ezek. 38:1–6). Russia will have five key allies: Turkey, Iran, Libya, Sudan and the nations of Central Asia. Amazingly, all of these nations are Muslim nations and Iran, Libya and Sudan are three of Israel's most ardent opponents. It is not surprising that Iran is one of the nations that are included in the list of those attacking Israel in the last days. The Lord says, "And I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords" (Ezek. 38:4).

Some detractors of our view of Bible prophecy have said that with the fall of the Soviet Empire a Russian led invasion seems very unlikely from a geo-political standpoint. It has always been the case that this prophecy speaks of a Russian led, not a Soviet led, attack against Israel. Ever since the fall of the Soviet Empire Russian has continued to maintain close relations with most of the Islamic nations, especially those in the Middle East. It would not be surprising from a geo-political perspective to see Russia join with Islamic states like Iran in a surprise attack against Israel.

CONCLUSION

For over fifteen years I have speculated that the "hook in the jaw" of Gog that God could use to bring a reluctant Russia down upon the land of Israel could be some thing like the following scenario that I articulated to Hal Lindsey on a National television show[7] in 1990 on the day the first Gulf War ended: I could see the Muslims coming to the Russians and telling them that America has set a precedent for an outside power coming into the Middle East to right a perceived wrong. (America has done it again in recent years by going into Afghanistan and Iraq.) On that basis, Russia should help out her Muslim friends by leading them in an overwhelming invasion of Israel in order to solve the Middle East Conflict in favor of the Islamic nations. Will this be the "hook in the Jaw" of Gog? Only time will tell. But something is up in the Middle East and Russia appears to have her fingerprints all over things. We know that the Bible predicts just such an alignment and invasion to take place "in the latter years" (Ezek. 38:8). Maranatha!

ENDNOTES

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[1] Mortimer B. Zuckerman, "Moscow's Mad Gamble," *U. S. News & World Report,* Internet Edition (Jan. 30, 2006), p. 1.
[2] Victor Davis Hanson, "The not-so-mad mind of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad," *Jewish World Review*, Internet Edition (Jan. 19, 2006), p. 1.
[3] From the following Islamic web address: www.ezsoftech.com/islamic/infallible14a.asp, accessed on Feb. 1, 2006.
[4] From the following Islamic web address: www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/SHIA/HIDDEN.HTM, accessed on Feb. 1, 2006.
[5] Zuckerman, "Moscow's Mad Gamble," p. 1.
[6] Zuckerman, "Moscow's Mad Gamble," p. 1.
[7] On "The Praise the Lord" show on Trinity Broadcasting Network.