

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



IRANIAN PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD EXAMINES NUCLEAR-PROGRAM CENTRIFUGES.

IRAN, THE NEXT NUCLEAR WAR?

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

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INDEX:

IRAN, THE NEXT NUCLEAR WAR? P. 2
— ALEX ENESCU

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE? P. 3
— CHARLES BYBELEZER

PERSECUTIONS OF CHRISTIAN MINORITIES P. 4
— STEPHEN MACHNIK

POST-REVOLUTION LIBYA? P. 5
— SANDRO-ANGELO DE THOMASIS

TIMELINE – 9TH OF AV P. 6
— STEPHEN MACHNIK
— ALEX ENESCU (TEXT)

TIMELINE – 9TH OF AV P. 7
— STEPHEN MACHNIK
— ALEX ENESCU (TEXT)

THE DANGER OF ABSOLUTES P. 8
— SABRINA GUERRIERI

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES P. 9
— STEPHEN MECHNIK

THE LEVIATHAN OIL P. 10
— LAURA GAITAN

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM P. 11
— CHARLES DAOUST

U.S. ELECTIONS 2012 P. 12
— ABRAHAM HAVIS

Iran, The Next Nuclear War?

— Alex Enescu, Editor

On the 20th of March details from a recent Pentagon war game were leaked to the *New York Times*. The war games were carried out over a two-week period by U.S. Central Command to test communication between Tampa, Florida, and forces in the Persian Gulf. The leaks revealed advanced preparation for war against Iran by the Obama administration, based on the premise of an Israeli preemptive strike on Tehran.

When the exercise had ended, General Mattis, from the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Development Command, concluded that an “Israeli first-strike would likely have dire consequences across the regions and for United State forces there” [*The New York Times*]. What General Mattis seems to have failed to mention is the consequences in the event of an Iranian nuclear strike on Israel.

Earlier this months Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with President Obama. The news that was sent to the Knesset was favorable. Netanyahu had secured agreement from President Obama to launch a military intervention into Iran, if Israel saw fit. “This position was positively received in the United States, I would even say in the most profound way,” Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly said.

On the 20th of March the Israeli Defense Secretary, Ehud Barak, underlined the necessity for Israel to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities: “the window of opportunity for a strike is rapidly closing... Iran’s nuclear program is steadily approaching maturation.”

One of the U.S. officials who briefed the *New York Times* declared that they “see an Israeli attack on Iran within the next year as a possibility.” U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta was reported by the *Washington Post* to have said that “there is a strong likelihood that Israel will strike Iran in April, May, or June.”

The prime purpose of these military threats it to pressure Iran to make concessions in the upcoming negotiations with the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany (the so called P5+1).

However, Barack has already cast doubts over the planned talks, stating on Monday (March 19th) that “we would love to see [negations], but I’m not sure that that’s going to happen.”

Iran has declared multiple times that any attack by Israel will be seen as an aggression that is perpetuated in collaboration with the U.S. “Iran believed that Israel and the United States were partners in any strike against Iranian nuclear sites and therefore considered American military forces in the Persian Gulf as complicit in the attack” [*The New York Times*]. In light of this, the Obama administration has been cleverly distancing itself from any Israel strike.

The results of war with Iran will far exceed those of the invasion of Iraq. The latest Pentagon war game concluded that any attack on Iranian nuclear facilities would “only” set back Tehran’s nuclear programs by three years. Due to the isolated and mountainous location of many Iranian nuclear plants, conventional weapons would probably do little damage. *The Times* reported that a series of more extensive attacks would be necessary, using long-range bombers, refueling aircraft and precision missiles.

On Wednesday, the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the Egyptian Mohamed ElBaradei, warned Israel that a military strike on Iran’s nuclear sites would not bring any good results and would only encourage the Islamic republic to develop nuclear weapons.

“You can bomb their facilities, but you cannot bomb their knowledge,” ElBaradei said. “If you were to bomb Iranian facilities, there would be a lesson for Iran – to develop nuclear weapons.” If they are not already doing so.

In the advent of such an attack, chances are that the conflict will likely spill into regional war, which Israel will undoubtedly be blamed for. It is safe to say that the Jewish state is currently going through an existential dilemma.

A Blessing In Disguise?

—Charles Bybelezer
Publications Chairman for the *Canadian Institute for
Jewish Research.*

Earlier this month, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas revealed himself. In the presence of Qatar's rabidly anti-Israel Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa, and alongside Hamas' exiled Politburo chief Khaled Meshal, Abbas' Fatah party signed a reconciliation agreement with Hamas, paving the way for the formation of a Palestinian unity government. With the stroke of a pen, Abbas' prior assertion that "there are no more differences between [Fatah and Hamas]" was ratified. Abbas now clearly and officially considers, as a primary Palestinian aim, the annihilation of Israel.

And to alleviate all doubt (or misplaced hope), when asked the next day whether the reconciliation agreement would "moderate" Hamas, Political Bureau member Izzat al-Rishq declared: "The Palestinian people maintain their right to all forms of resistance, and we are committed to armed resistance...to confront the...Zionist enemy's plans."

As for the so-called "international community," the response was relatively muted. A spokesman at the U.S. mission in Tel Aviv said the Obama administration would not articulate a "formal position on a speculative event," but rather would "wait to see what happens." If only Israel's "speculative" approval of the construction of a few hundred houses in its capital city drew such careful hesitation.

Surprisingly, the EU also refrained from assuming an official stance. However, given the EU's reaction in November following a previous round of reunification talks—"[the EU has] consistently called for reconciliation under Abbas' authority"—no doubt the Europeans still consider Hamas' inclusion in Palestinian politics as "an opportunity rather than a threat," as well as, incredibly and without justification, "essential for securing a lasting peace with Israel."

Less surprising was UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's message to the PA President: Fatah's affiliation with a terrorist organization committed to Israel's destruction should not be viewed as contradictory to, or excluding, negotiating with the Jewish state. In a twisted sense, Ban is correct. Abbas' partnership with genocidal Hamas will in no manner affect his policy of rejecting direct negotiations with Israel.

For his part, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu left little to the imagination: "Hamas is a terrorist organization that strives to destroy Israel, and which is supported by Iran. I have said many times in the past that the Palestinian Authority must choose between an alliance with Hamas and peace with Israel. Hamas and peace do not go together.... If Abu Mazen [Abbas] implements what has been signed, he will have chosen to abandon the way of peace...."

Speaking at the signing ceremony in Doha, Abbas reinforced the idea that the unity agreement was reached "not only so that it would be published, but in order to implement it on the ground."

Netanyahu has spoken. Abbas has chosen. And what a tremendous blessing for Israel's leader. The phony "peace process," the thorn in Netanyahu's, and Israel's, side, is on hold.

And try as they may, there is nothing the professional peace-processors can do about it.

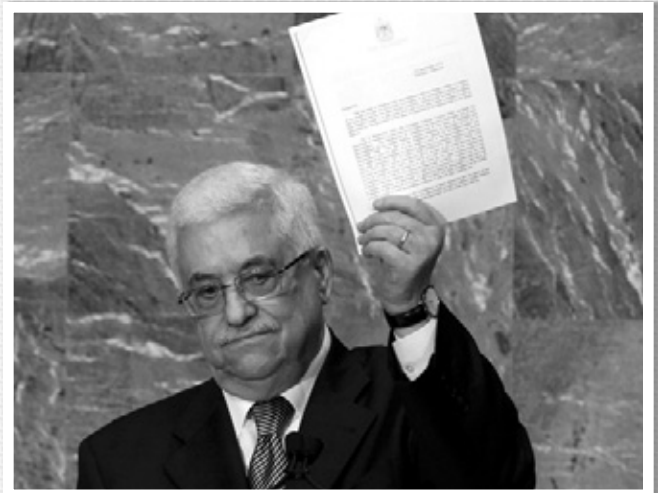
As for Mr. Obama, he will continue to pressure Israel to make unilateral concessions to the Hamas-Fatah terrorist entity. One needs only to consider Obama's current eagerness to "engage" (*i.e.*, conduct "peace" negotiations with) the Taliban to deduce the President's unwavering policy of appeasing sworn enemies. Thankfully, neither the U.S. Congress nor Republicans will have any part of it, particularly during an election year. Obama, scavenging for a second term, cannot mistreat the Jewish state: he will need to pander, and should be adequately contained.

More important, however, is Israeli public opinion. Once upon a time, the people of Israel were duped into believing that a man by the name of Yasser Arafat would transform his terror organization into a viable partner for peace. Twenty years and thousands of casualties later, Israelis will not repeat this mistake with Hamas.

And so Mr. Netanyahu has been afforded the opportunity not only to strengthen his political base by casting aside the belligerent Palestinians, but also to shore up public support as he shifts Israel's attention towards its most urgent priority—Iran.

Rest assured, in the coming months—be it April, May, or June, as strangely, and dangerously, leaked by U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, the military chief of Israel's purported "best friend"—Netanyahu will need all the allies he can amass.

Ironically, Palestinian "reconciliation" will have played a small but useful part in Netanyahu's drive to stop Iran's nuclear weapons program. All eyes can now be focused exclusively on Tehran.



MAHMOUD ABBAS PRESIDENT OF
THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY
SUBMITTING APPLICATION FOR
STATEHOOD AT THE UN 2011

Persecutions of Christians & Other Minorities

— Stephen Machnik

The plight of Middle Eastern Christians has been difficult at best, but since the advent of Arab Spring, despite the hope generated, it has been even more hazardous. While Christians were offered some protection under dictatorships, now it would now appear the Egyptian military has declared open season on Egyptian Copts.

The Palestinian territories are no exception to this rule of behavior and have been even more consistent in the long term in their systematic deprivation of human rights, their persecution of minorities and the killing of Arab Christians.

For example the Christian community of Bethlehem, which historically was in the majority, now comprises less than fifteen percent of the population. A Christian may not sell land even to a family member and is forced to sell at reduced rates to a Muslim. For a person such as former president Carter, who is a Christian, to call Israel an apartheid state and make no mention of the persecution of Christians by the Palestinians suggests that he is either ignorant of the facts or willfully biased.

The persecution of other minorities living under Muslim/Arab rule is also ongoing. The persecution of the Baha'i, originally from Iran continues. The founder of Baha'i was exiled from Iran in the 1850's and their

headquarters were later established in Haifa, Israel where they now live in safety. The persecution of African Christians by Arab Muslims, as in the Sudan, has forced Christians to flee to Israel, their only place of refuge in the Middle East. It is impossible to square the notion of Israeli apartheid when one considers black Africans fleeing to Jewish Israel, unless of course one's apartheid rationale functions by disallowing certain facts that would conflict with the predetermined anti-Israel doctrine.

In October 2010 the attack on the Syriac Catholic Church in Baghdad left 58 dead. Two months later the Melkite Greek Patriarch Gregory III Laham, the spiritual leader of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, called the attacks on Iraq's Christians 'a Zionist conspiracy against Islam'. It would appear that there is a serious hostage mentality within the Middle Eastern churches. Why else would the leader of the Melkite church defend Islam by blaming Zionism?

A reliable account of Christian persecution in the Palestinian territories is documented by Justus Reid Weiner from the *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*. It is time and long past the time for governments, churches and Muslim authorities to address the increasingly dire plight of Middle Eastern Christians.



THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



For a partial listing of Muslim persecution of Christians see the following at *Middle East Forum*:

<http://www.meforum.org/3171/muslim-persecution-of-christians-january-2012>



Post-Revolution Libya?

— Sandro-Angelo de Thomasis

As residents of the once-besieged town of Misurata cast their first electoral ballots in hopes of setting the standard across Libya, a dark cloud of uncertainty prevails over Africa's fourth largest country. Only twenty miles away, in Tripoli, fragmented militias divided into various interest groups and tribal allegiances are chaotically jostling for position with erratic outbursts of violence, while the national government powerlessly looks on. Amnesty International recently released a forty-five page report detailing human rights abuses and torture perpetrated by these heterogeneous militias. The national election is set for the month of June, while the lack of security and intermittent factional violence are rendering the notion of a smooth transition into a "democratic" (post-Gaddafi) era highly unlikely.

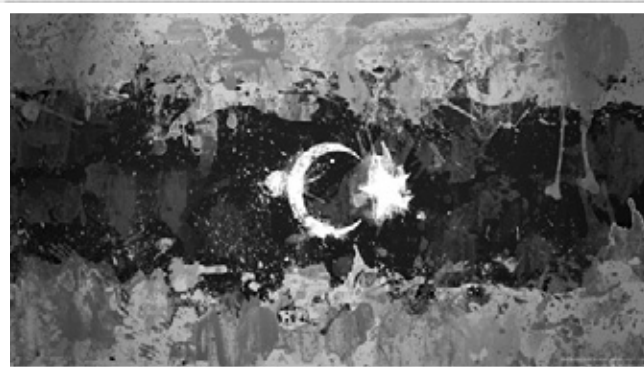
As if unbridled armed militias aren't problematic enough, popular discontent against the self-appointed National Transitional Council is raging on, prompting Libya's interim Prime Minister Abdurrahim El-Keib to promise cash to families in order to quell the disgruntled Libyans. Moreover, protesters armed with hand grenades recently stormed the NTC headquarters in Benghazi demanding greater transparency and justice from the interim government Chairman Mustafa Abdul-Jalil. This growth in frustration with the pace and direction of the country's transition into a constitutional democracy from the Libyan populace is eerily reminiscent of the loss of faith in Russia's initial Provisional Government leader Alexander Kerensky. Alexander who? My point exactly...

Long story short, Kerensky was one of the most prominent leaders of the February Revolution and served as the second Prime Minister of the Russian Provisional Government. This short-lived administrative body sought to ensure a smooth transition to Russia's post-Tsarist future. However, due to political factionalism and the breakdown of state structures, Kerensky's government was unable to apply any decisive policies. Moreover, Kerensky's decision to arm the Petrograd workers—much like the heavily-armed Libyan militias—was to become a self-inflicted wound whereby these armed workers joined Lenin's Bolsheviks and launched the October Revolution. The rest is history.

The point of this brief excursus is to show, by historical antecedent, the almost impossible task of containing revolutionary forces. Odds are that a bloody

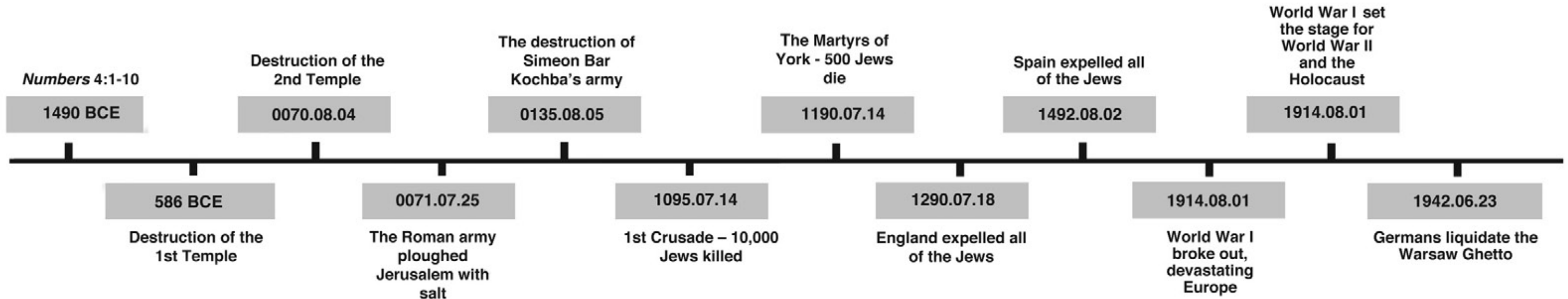
civil war will shortly materialize in Libya. One does not have to take my word for it, but, should, instead, look into the long list of civil wars that seem to be the natural outcome of revolutions: the English Civil War, the American Civil War, the Spanish Civil War, the Somali Civil War, the Mexican Civil War and, of course, the Russian Civil War. History has shown that only the form of opposition with the strongest ideology and the most arms will prevail. The bottom line is that who controls the most weapons and minds, will end up controlling Libya.

Chances are that Islamist tribal militias will turn the lives of Libyans into a living hell and plunder the nation's oil resources in order to buy armaments. Allegiances and power-sharing will galvanise around the traditional territorial divisions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan. The first two will fight a bitter struggle and the outcome will be decided by the third, as Fezzani peasants and tribes adhere to either one or the other. In contrast to this worst-case—but most likely—scenario, Mohammed El-Senussi, the legitimate heir to the Senussi Crown of Libya, could return and form a constitutional monarchy based on the 1951 Constitution. Support for the Royal Senussi dynasty has traditionally been strong in the region of Cyrenaica, where its main city, Benghazi was the site of the turning point in the war against Gaddafi's forces. In this best of possible worlds, the restoration of the monarchy would provide to the Libyan nation a much-needed sense of historical continuity, prestige and stability. However, as most people know, one can't derive an "ought" from an "is".



THE REBEL FLAG OF LIBYA WAS FIRST USED BETWEEN 1951-69, UNDER THE LIBYAN MONARCHY.

Jewish History Timeline — Events Occuring On The 9th of Av



The Ninth of Av, known in Hebrew as Tisha B'Av, is an annual fast day in Judaism. The ninth of Av is the ninth day (Tisha) of the Hebrew month Av. The fast is in commemoration for the destruction of both Temples, which happened 655 years apart on the same Hebrew date. Interestingly, many Jewish tragedies seem to occur on this day. This day has often been called the “saddest day in Jewish history”.

The following events all took place on the 9th of Av:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>I. The First Temple built by King Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians. This led to the Babylonian exile.</p> <p>II. The Second Temple built by Ezra was destroyed by the Romans. This led to the scattering of the Jewish people and started the Jewish exile.</p> <p>III. The Romans crushed the Bar Kokhba revolt and destroyed the city of Betar, killing over 100,000 Jews.</p> <p>IV. Following the Roman siege of Jerusalem, Roman commander Turnus Rufus plowed the site of the Temple and the surrounding area.</p> | <p>V. The First Crusade was declared by Pope Urban II on July 20, 1095. The Crusades killed 10,000 Jews in its first month alone and destroyed many Jewish communities in France and the Rhineland.</p> <p>VI. Jews were expelled from England on July 25, 1290.</p> <p>VII. Jews were expelled from Spain on August 11, 1492.</p> <p>VIII. On August 1, 1914, World War I broke out.</p> <p>IX. The mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto July 23, 1942.</p> |
|---|---|

The fast of Tisha b'Av falls on the Hebrew calendar date of 9 Av. Here are the coinciding secular dates for the upcoming years:

2012: July 28-29

2013: July 15-16

2014: August 4-5

2015: July 25-26



THE LIQUIDATION OF THE WARSAW GHETTO, 9TH OF AV (SEPTEMBER, 1942)

The Danger of Absolutes In The Iran-Israel Conflagration

— Sabrina Guerrieri

What can be termed as a ‘war of rhetoric’ between Israel and Iran has, in recent months, escalated as calls for preemptive strikes enter the realm of political discourse. Whereas Iran has to forestall an Israeli attack on its nuclear facilities, Israel seeks to limit Iranian nuclear capability before atomic weapons are obtained. A military strike is “necessary”, “inevitable” and even “unavoidable”, we are told—absolutes are known to have soothing effects.

And while, yes, it would be preposterous to deny the fact that each country views the other as a central security challenge, it might be refreshing to remember the years of cooperation among this sea of increasing hostility.

It may be easy to overlook the fact that diplomatic relations were not always non-existent between both nations. As the “Periphery doctrine”, created by David Ben-Gurion in the 1950’s, exemplifies: the enemy of my enemy can also be my friend. If Israel was surrounded by hostile Arab states, Ben-Gurion realized that close relations needed to be established with non-Arab countries—and thus began a sustained yet unofficial relationship between Israel and Iran founded on common fears and interests.

For one, they both feared the force of Pan-Arabism that was flourishing under Nasser, particularly before the Suez War of 1956. And second, they both feared Iraq; the Mossad and the SAVAK (Israel’s and Iran’s intelligence organizations) joined forces in aiding the Kurds in their struggle against the Iraqi central government. This intelligence and military union continued to develop until the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and it is fair to say that they both benefited under the alliance doctrine.

Exemplifying their low-key relationship based on common interests was the top-secret partnership between the National Iranian Oil Company and

Israel, whereby companies were established in Panama and Switzerland in order to conceal their traces. This central legal entity, known as the Trans-Asiatic Oil Trading Company, likewise gave leeway for the subsidiary Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company, which provided Iranian oil directly into Israel.

Soon following, Project Flower (appropriately titled for such co-operative blooming) was a collaborative effort by both nations to reproduce american-designed missiles with Israeli made parts. It was one of six oil-for-arms contracts that the countries signed in the late 1970s, which were worth an estimated \$1.2 billion. With the understanding that both countries’ armies would purchase the new defense systems once operational, Israel was to lead the development while Iran provided the construction and testing facilities.

One would think that with the fall of the Shah and the coming of the Islamic republic, relations between both countries would have come to a halt. In part, it largely did—Iran’s Islamist rhetoric against the Jewish state significantly heightened as the Iran-Iraq war was depicted as an effort to liberate occupied Palestinian land, and in 1982 it hastened the creation of Hezbollah, in Lebanon. However, despite such factors, relations continued to exist as Iran realized the value of an Israeli counterweight to its Arab neighbors.

In great part, Israel helped the regime in avoiding total isolation—especially in regards to supplying arms during the Iran-Iraq war. In return for Israeli assistance, which went against U.S. policy, Ayatollah Khomeini allowed a large number of Iranian Jews to leave Iran for the United States or Israel. Although this wasn’t a particular sacrifice on Iran’s part, Israel did benefit economically and geopolitically from the arms deal.

Unfortunately, cooperation did officially cease in the 1990’s, yet we

mustn’t forget Iran’s more moderate leaders such as Khatami, who offered conciliatory gestures to Israel, including a proposal that Iran would support a two-state solution. How far this would have gone is hard to say.

The point is that it has only been in the last decade that Iran and Israel view each other as bitter enemies and security threats. Although mutual hostility has defined their relationship since 1979, as mentioned earlier, there has been cooperation in the face of common fears and interests, both prior to and after the Revolution.

The current climate is a historically contingent one based on the culmination of numerous factors that are not addressed here. Admittedly, the situation is complicated at best. However, the most alarming outcome of such hostility is the lack of diplomatic relations that exists between both nations.

The gesture of highlighting such historical antecedents here is of symbolic nature, rather than political naïveté or idealism. A direct Iran-Israel conflict would not be an isolated affair. It would involve the major international players, such as China, Russia, the United States, Europe and all the oil producing countries of the Arab peninsula. Given the possibility of such an apocalyptic prophecy, the very basic re-opening of diplomatic relations, where it feasible, would help diffuse such an undesirable outcome.



IRANIAN FLAG

Christian Attitudes Towards The State of Israel

— Stephen Machnik

The problems in the Middle East reflect a worldwide church attitude. One attitude suggests that Israel is the cause of all hostility. However there is another reality. I met with Pastor Naim Khoury from Bethlehem (in the PA territory) in 2003. The pastor had been shot at numerous times and his church bombed by the Palestinians. He was now living in Jerusalem. Despite the extreme conditions under which Christians live, there has as yet been relatively little reporting, either by the churches or the media.

One would expect Christians to be more concerned. Such is not the case. The World Council of Churches, which seems to have some influence over the political bent of many national and international denominations (mostly Orthodox and Protestant), takes its cue from the Middle East Council of Churches. The Presbyterian Church of Canada (as one example) has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years to organizations such as Sabeel and MECC. A Christian pastor living in Israel suggested that organizations such as MECC or the Palestinian Sabeel can be compared to the Chinese Communist church. The organization maintains a Christian doctrine in line with government policy but does not account for the lives of individuals who are being persecuted within the regime. So for all intents everything appears fine.

Sabeel, which is avowedly anti-Israel, is headquartered in Jerusalem and benefits from Israel's

democratic largesse. Dr. Paul Merkley, professor emeritus of history at Carleton University in Ottawa, who has authored books such as *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel*, has made numerous attempts to speak at Christian anti-Israel conferences, including those held at the headquarters of Sabeel in Jerusalem. He was obstructed at every turn.

In my own experience I had limited success developing a seminar program under the auspices of B'nai Brith (2004-2006) to help facilitate Christian-Jewish relations. Several years later I attended a church which had a good community outreach program. I tried for a year to interest the pastor in the seminar program. After a year's impasse, he finally declared—in the midst of our discussion on relations—"Israel, tear down the wall." What did Israeli security have to do with Christian-Jewish relations? I promptly walked out in exasperation.

On another occasion I called the local representative for Middle Eastern churches and suggested that we discuss the persecution which I knew their particular denominations were experiencing. I wanted to compare my understanding of events in the Middle East with their own perspective. He said that "there was nothing to talk about" and that they "don't get involved in politics".

The attitude held by many churches, that Israel is responsible for hostilities, ignores the serious plight of Christians living under Muslim rule.

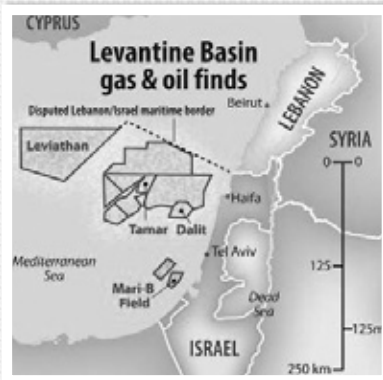


THE TEMPLE MOUNT, WHERE THE FIRST AND THE SECOND JEWISH TEMPLE STOOD, IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS SITES IN THE WORLD. IT HAS BEEN USED AS A RELIGIOUS SITE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

AT LEAST FOUR RELIGIONS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE USED THE TEMPLE MOUNT: JUDAISM, ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ROMAN PAGANISM.

The Leviathan Oil

— Laura Gaitan



THE U.S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ESTIMATES A MEAN OF 1.7 MILLION BARRELS OF RECOVERABLE OIL AND A MEAN OF 122 TRILLION CUBIC FEET OF RECOVERABLE GAS IN THE LEVANTINE BASIN PROVINCE.



“DESTRUCTION OF LEVIATHAN”. 1865 ENGRAVING BY GUSTAVE DORÉ

NOTE: THE LEVIATHAN IS A SEA MONSTER REFERRED TO IN THE BIBLE. THE WORD HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH ANY LARGE SEA MONSTER OR CREATURE. IN MODERN HEBREW, IT MEANS SIMPLY “WHALE.”

In 2009, Noble Energy, Israel’s exploration partner, discovered a mid-sized reserve of natural gas. The Tamar field is located some fifty miles west of Haifa, with an estimated 238 billion cubic meters of the highest quality natural gas. A year later, a reservoir twice the size of Tamar was found. The Leviathan, named after the Biblical sea monster, is a deep-sea field situated in the Mediterranean some one hundred thirty kilometres away from the Israel coastline and three miles deep.

Together both reserves contain enough gas to meet Israel’s energy needs for over a hundred years. The Leviathan contains some 450 billion cubic meters of natural gas. The discovery of the Leviathan oil field brings great news to Israel which, until now, was energy dependent on other countries and had to import natural gas. Israel’s oil was imported from former Soviet Union states even as Turkey, one of Israel’s neighboring countries, is a big supplier of natural gas. However because of the tension between these two countries and the Arab boycott, importing gas was a difficult and complicated task.

Israel, now energy self-sufficient, can begin exporting the excess of the resource to other countries. This would bring a significant amount of wealth to the country; some \$300 billion over the life of the fields.

Not surprisingly, as soon as the Leviathan oil fields were discovered, other countries surrounding Israel reacted to the news. Lebanon, for example, contests Israeli exclusive control of the field. They argue that one third of the Leviathan belongs to their territorial sub-sea *Exclusive Economic Zone*. To back up their claim Lebanon has provided the UN

with maps of their territory. Moreover, Lebanese Hezbollah is also claiming Leviathan oil field for itself. As for Israel, the country’s Foreign Minister answered with “We won’t give an inch” of what belongs to Jerusalem.

The dispute between Lebanon and Israel has to be solved before Israel seeks to begin extracting the material. Natural gas is a complicated resource. It is difficult to extract and expensive to transport. Noble is currently looking for partners to invest in an exportation project, but a project of this scope will cost billions and take years to construct. Moreover, Israel must also decide to whom it will export gas if it decides to do so. Exportations could take the route towards Europe, where Turkey holds a special status as it is the the source of most exports of energy to the West. Exportation could also take the route towards India. The Israeli Prime Minister in his recent visit to India met with the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Jaipal Reddi and discussed the possibility of Indian energy companies investing in the extraction of Tamar and the Leviathan gas. If India, which currently imports Iran’s oil, decides to take this route, it will probably increase tensions with Iran, which has bad diplomatic relations with Israel.

Furthermore, if Israel decides to export to Europe, tension between Israel and Turkey will increase. Currently Turkey has almost a monopoly over the exportation of natural gas to Europe, charging energy transit fees that are a great sources of income. With the discovery of the Leviathan Israel must decide what route to take if then decides to export.

Timeline of Iran's Nuclear Program

— Charles Daoust

1957

The United States and Iran signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement as part of the United States *Atoms for Peace* program. The agreement provided for U.S. technical assistance and the lease of enriched uranium to Iran. It also called for research cooperation on peaceful nuclear energy uses.

1974

May 15 – Iran signed the *NPT's* Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The safeguards allowed inspections for the purpose of verifying that nuclear enrichment for peaceful nuclear energy is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

1978

January – Iran and the United States initialed a nuclear agreement in which Iran agreed to safeguards beyond NPT requirements. In return, the United States granted Iran “most favored nation” status for reprocessing so that Iran would not be discriminated against when seeking permission to reprocess U.S.-supplied fuel.

1979

After the 1979, Khomeini revolution, the United States stopped supplying highly enriched uranium for the Tehran Research Reactor.

1992

Aug. 25 – Russia and Iran signed a cooperation agreement on the civil use of nuclear energy, including construction of a nuclear power plant.

1998

Feb. 23 – The Clinton administration opposed Iran's nuclear energy program on grounds that Iran had sufficient oil and gas reserves for power and that work on the nuclear power reactor could indirectly contribute to a weapons program.

1999

May 19 – President Mohammad Khatami paid a five-day state visit to Saudi Arabia, where Iran and Saudi Arabia issued a joint statement expressing support for turning the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. They said Israel's

production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, along with its non-compliance with international laws and treaties, posed a serious threat to peace and security in the region.

2003

Nov. 12 – The IAEA concluded there was no evidence of a secret nuclear weapons program in Iran but showed concern about its production of plutonium. President Khatami said that the plutonium was used for manufacturing pharmaceuticals and the small amount produced by Iran could not make a nuclear bomb.

2005

Jan. 13 – IAEA inspectors were only allowed partial access to the Parchin military base near Tehran. Under the NPT, Iran was not required to allow inspectors into its military bases. But the Bush administration consistently expressed concern that Iran's failure to allow full access to its suspected military bases and facilities was linked to a secret nuclear weapons program.

2006

July 31 – The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1696 demanding that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment activities within one month. No sanctions were imposed but the resolution warned that “appropriate measures” would be taken. Tehran called the resolution illegal.

Oct. 2 – President Bush signed into law the Iran Freedom Support Act, which imposed economic sanctions on nations and companies that aided Iran's nuclear program.

Dec. 23 – The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1737, sanctioning Iran for its failure to comply with Resolution 1696 and halt uranium enrichment. The resolution banned the sale of nuclear-related technology to Iran and froze the assets of key individuals and companies related to the nuclear program.

2008

Feb. 22 – An IAEA report concluded that Iran had not fully answered the international community's questions about its nuclear program and testing of new centrifuge technology for faster uranium enrichment. The report was based in part on intelligence acquired by the Bush administration that allegedly pointed to Iranian efforts to

weaponize nuclear materials. The data was extracted from a laptop reportedly smuggled out of Iran in 2004.

Sept. 26 – The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1835 which reaffirmed three earlier rounds of sanctions against Iran.

2010

Feb. 12 – President Ahmadinejad announced that Iran had produced 20 percent enriched uranium, up from 3.5 percent, in a move that marked a major increase in its capabilities. He said Iran had the capability to enrich the fuel even further.

June 9 – The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1929, imposing a fourth round of sanctions on Iran. They included tighter financial measures and an expanded arms embargo. President Ahmadinejad said the sanctions were a “used handkerchief that should be thrown in the dustbin,” and that they were “not capable of harming Iranians.”

June 24 – Congress approved the *Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act* of 2010. It passed unanimously in the Senate and overwhelmingly in the House. The bill expanded existing U.S. sanctions on Iran. It imposed extensive sanctions on foreign companies that export refined petroleum to Iran or invest in Iran's energy sector. The legislation went well beyond UN Resolution 1929.

Aug. 21 – An official launch ceremony was held to mark completion of the Bushehr reactor, after years of delays. Iran began loading the plant with fuel, in hopes of making it fully operational within a few months. As part of the deal, Russia supplied the reactor with fuel and Iran is required to send back the spent fuel to Russia.

2011

November – the IAEA released a report stating inspectors had found credible evidence that Iran had been conducting experiments aimed at designing a nuclear bomb until 2003, and research may have continued on a lower rate since that time.

2012

Feb. 24 – IAEA Director General Amano reported that high-level IAEA delegations had met twice with Iranian officials to resolve outstanding issues, but Iran did not grant IAEA requests for access to the Parchin site, where the IAEA believes high-explosives research pertinent to nuclear weapons may have taken place.



REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES

With the U.S. Presidential election only months away it is impossible to watch a news channel, read a newspaper, or log onto any news website without seeing numerous references to American foreign policy and Iran's nuclear program.

With regard to Israel, Obama's foreign policy has been received differently by various groups in the United States. His overall approval rating has gone down 29 points among Jews since his inauguration. Their main point of criticism is Obama's lack of fairness in forwarding the peace process and his lack of action in stopping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. This is noteworthy as Jews voted in the 2008 election at a ration of 4:1 for Obama against McCain.

U.S. Elections 2012

— Abraham Havis

On March 8, President Obama met with Israel's premier Benjamin Netanyahu. During their meeting, Obama reportedly said to Netanyahu that he needs to be patient on the subject of Iran and its nuclear ambitions. His positions appears to be undermined by Republican opponents, who present themselves as being more sensitive to Jewish concerns.

Among the Republican candidates Newt Gringrich and Rick Santorum are extremely pro-Israel.

Mitt Romney, republican candidate, has based certain elements of his campaign on Obama's loss in popularity among American-Jews. One of the key elements for both Obama and Romney is deciding what to do about Iran and its nuclear situation. At the Republican Debate in Arizona, Romney attacked Obama saying that he chose not to implement crippling sanctions on Iran. Romney felt that a nuclear Iran would pose an immediate threat to Israel. Specifically, Iran could give nuclear materials to Hamas or Hezbollah. They would likely attack Israel with them or even smuggle them into South America from where America could be attacked, according to Romney.

Romney has also stated that, if elected, his first trip event would be to Israel. Speaking at a Republican Jewish Coalition, he said that Obama has "chastened" Israel. He noted that Obama had skipped Israel in his Middle East tour, and also said that under his own leadership, "Iran's ayatollahs will not be allowed to get nuclear weapons."

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