



## A Cube of Conflict: Iran, Russia and the Middle East Puzzle

Winston Churchill once said that Russia was likened to a *riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma*. The confusing situation in the Middle East is more likened to a Rubik Cube, the mechanical puzzle consisting of six different solid colors that randomly cover each side of the cube.

### THE DRUMS OF WAR

Iran has been the most difficult color in the Middle East Cube. Each time the United States makes a diplomatic or military adjustment, a different color pops up. Iran's persistent determination to join the *nuclear family* has been the latest piece of the puzzle to threaten political and economic solidarity in the Middle East.

Recently Washington attributed nearly 200 American military fatalities to Iranian-provided weaponry in Iraq. It reported that the Quds Force, an arm of Iran's notorious Revolutionary Guards Corps, have trained Iraqi insurgents to carry out rocket attacks on Baghdad's Green Zone. The Pentagon has already drawn up plans for *shock and awe* in Iran with massive strikes against 1,200 targets, according to author William Jasper based on reports from the London Times and the Director of Terrorism and National Security at the Nixon Center

### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The impetus behind war with Iran has come from Norman Podhoretz, now a senior foreign policy advisor to the GOP presidential hopeful, Rudy Giuliani, and from former American Ambassador to the UN, John Bolton. Podhoretz, a neo-conservative, has been clamoring for an attack on Iran as part of an overall strategy to eliminate all belligerent elements in the Middle East. Both he and Bolton have been ardent supporters of the *Bush Doctrine*, which promises American economic and military support to overcome the *axis of evil* that threatens the stability of the world. Iran is one of its focal points.

There also has been a marked increase in the number of calls from talk show hosts and think tanks for massive pre-emptive military strikes on Iran. Their constant message has been sent out through the blogosphere, the lecture circuit, the airwaves, television news and the political campaign trail.

The desire for war is by no means universal. As much as

some want an expanded war in the Middle East, dissidents from both sides of the political spectrum passionately oppose any military actions in Iran. Journalists from the *New Republic* and *The American Conservative*, believe that war with Iran would not be in the national interest. Patrick Buchanan emphasizes that Iran is not in the *same league as the Soviet Union of Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev* as a threat to American freedom.

Buchanan also addresses the question of *unintended consequences*. He believes that war with Iran *could lead to a break-up of that country, with Persians, Azeris, Kurds, Arabs and Baluchis going their separate ways*. This would create a fertile enclave for Al-Qaida recruitment. Writing in the June 4, 2007 issue of *The American Conservative*, British writer Peter Hitchens points out that Iranian students are not hostile to the U.S. but their government is using propaganda tricks to unite them against an American attack.

### OPERATION AJAX

Iran has been a trouble spot for the West since 1901 when the Shah of Iran granted a 60-year oil concession to William Knox D'Arcy. D'Arcy struck oil in 1908 but later sold a controlling interest to the Burma Oil Company, which became the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) in 1909. In 1921 a military coup, organized by the British, placed Reza Pahlavi on the throne as Shah of Iran. To thwart the Nazis in 1941, Britain invaded Iran, secured both Iranian oil production and its strategic railways and installed the Shah's 22 year-old son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as Shah of Iran.

In March 1951, the pro-western Prime Minister Ali Razmara was assassinated. That April, the Iranian parliament passed a bill that nationalized the oil industry. A month later, Parliament elected Socialist Dr. Mohammed Mosaddeq as their Prime Minister. In 1953 the British re-established their control of Iranian oil by ousting Mosaddeq with United States assistance. The project to overthrow Iran's government and re-install the Shah in the seat of power was code-named *Operation Ajax*. The CIA's Kermit Roosevelt, Jr. used widespread bribery to engineer this covert operation.

The Shah maintained a pro-American government until his removal in 1979. In his 2007 book, *World War IV: The Long*

*Struggle Against Islamofascism*, Norman Podhoretz regarded the Shah's removal as a *barbinger of World War IV* against terrorism. The Carter Administration attempted to mitigate the damage by finding a new relationship with the defacto Iranian government. However, on October 22, 1979, against the wishes of the American Embassy in Tehran, President Carter made the decision to allow the Shah to receive medical treatment for his cancer at the Mayo Clinic in the U.S., intensifying the anti-American suspicions of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Shortly after, Khomeini revolutionaries engineered the hostage crisis that held 52 American employees and soldiers captive at the American Embassy for 444 days.

### THE SAVIOR OF TIMES

Iran's current president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a former Mayor of Teheran, is one of the most complex pieces in the Middle East puzzle. His controversial appearance at New York's Columbia University last fall, his Holocaust denials and his rants for Israel's annihilation, have exposed him as an unstable force. The most disturbing aspect of his bizarre personality is his apocalyptic religious zealotry.

Ahmadinejad's repeated invocation of Islam's messianic figure, the Imam Mahdi, known as *the Savior of Times*, has dangerous portents. According to Shia tradition, the 12th imam disappeared as a child in 941. In a striking parallel to Biblical accounts of *Armageddon*, the Mahdi is likened to a Shiite Messiah. At his return, he will lead a global battle between good and evil. After victory, he will reign on earth for seven years before casting his final judgment at the end of the world. Ahmadinejad has long believed that he will have a personal role in the *Age of the Mahdi*. He has often reiterated his belief that his main mission in life is to *pave the path for the glorious reappearance of Imam Mahdi*. Ahmadinejad is preparing his people for the coming of the Mahdi by encouraging Iranians to avoid the corruption and excesses of the West.

### REGIME CHANGE

The Mujahadeen-e-Khalq (MEK) further complicates the Middle East cube. Founded in the 1960s by a group of college-educated Iranian leftists who opposed the Shah, the MEK is the largest and most militant group opposed to the mullahs and Ahmadinejad. While the MEK was part of the 1979 Islamic revolution that replaced the Shah with the Ayatollah Khomeini, its ideology, a curious blend of Marxism and Islamism, clashed with the Shiite regime, which quickly executed its leaders. The MEK is an *urban guerrilla group*, whose philosophy is a Muslim variation of *liberation theology* that dominated Latin America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (see Aug. '07 Mindszenty Report)

In 1981 the MEK was forced to move to Paris where it began supporting Iraq in its eight-year war against Khomeini's Iran. In 1986 it moved to Iraq, which used MEK to harass its Iranian border. During the 2003 Iraq war, U.S. forces cracked down on MEK's bases in Iraq, and in June 2003 French authorities raided

its compound outside Paris, arresting 160 people, including Maryam Rajavi.

Maryam Rajavi, who hopes to become president of Iran, is MEK's principal leader. After relocating with the group to Paris, she was elected its joint leader with her husband Massoud, and later became deputy commander-in-chief of its armed forces. Experts say that MEK is a cult that is devoted to Massoud Rajavi's secular interpretation of the Koran.

MEK's consistent opposition to the mullahs has convinced the West that it is the best hope for a regime change. However, according to the March 6, 2007 issue of *The New American*, MEK was created *as part of a Soviet-sponsored international terrorist network that waged wars of national liberation throughout the developing world*. MEK has killed U.S. servicemen and contractors in Iran, and supplied American intelligence agencies with false information that is inexorably leading to a regime change.

### RUSSIAN FOOTPRINTS

Russian duplicity with regard to MEK bears watching. During a trip to Iran last October, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned against American military action in Iran. The Russians believe the U.S. idea of regime change is dangerous and laced with U.S.-Israeli self-interest that runs counter to Moscow's Middle East agenda.

To offset American pressure, the Russians export weapons, missiles and nuclear materials to Iran. In an August 24, 2006 article entitled, *Russian Footprints*, defector Lt. General Ion Mihai Pacepa chronicled a long list of other Russian intrusions into the Middle East. His book, *Red Horizons*, profiled the espionage, assassinations, bribery, bombings, and hijackings that characterized the KGB Cold War history. He reported that the KGB has built hospitals, houses, and roads in the Middle East. They have sent thousands of doctors, engineers, technicians, professors, and even dance instructors to subvert United States interests in the region.

Israel's Middle East presence has prompted the Russians to use Islam as a vehicle for undermining America's agenda. Since 1972 Russia has had in place a plan to turn the Muslim world against Israel and the U.S. Russian defector Anatoliy Golitsyn's 1995 book, *The Perestroika Deception*, states that *under concealed Russian guidance, the Muslims of the former Soviet Union...will seek to cooperate and ally themselves with Muslims in Iran and the Arab states while Russia maintains its open policy of partnership with the West*. To help accomplish this, the Russians showered the Islamic world with an Arabic translation of the tsarist forgery, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

### PUTIN'S RED SOUL

Russian machinations in the Middle East have also exposed the widely popular myth that its Communist legacy has gone the way of Nazism. Only the nomenclature of Soviet institutions has

changed, as many of the same people are still playing prominent roles. The ink on President Vladimir Putin's support for the United States after 9/11 was hardly dry before he began moving his country back into the terrorism business.

In March 2002, Putin reinstated sales of weapons to the Ayatollah Khamenei, and sent Russian engineers to assist in the construction of a 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactor at Bushehr, which is a uranium conversion facility able to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons. Hundreds of Russian technicians went to Iran to develop the Shahab-4 long-range missile. These missiles, which can carry nuclear or germ warheads, are in easy striking distance of, not only the Middle East but also Europe.

The assassination of Russian defector, Alexander Litvinenko in 2006 was the smoking gun that exposed Putin's true nature. The exiled author and former KGB agent had publicized Putin's role in global terrorism, which included the training and supporting of al-Qaeda operatives, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri. According to the September 3, 2007, *The New American*, *Islamic terrorism is joined at the hip with the international terror network, sponsored by Russia.*

In November, Putin's *Red soul* was further illustrated when he awarded the Gold Star and Hero of Russia medal to George Koval, who died in 2006 at the age of 94. Koval was the Soviet spy who had penetrated top-secret American Atomic installations in Ohio and Tennessee. Putin stated that Koval *was one of the most important spies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.* Koval's deep penetration of the Manhattan Project still rankles Washington, and Putin's celebration of that penetration is a public testimonial to the continued Communist duplicity of the Putin administration.

### A JUST WAR

There are no easy solutions to the *Iranian Cube*. The Vatican has been relatively quiet about a possible war with Iran. Pope Benedict XVI briefly alluded to this new Iranian crisis last Easter in his *Urbi et Orbi* message. He expressed hope that *an honorable solution may be found for all parties through serious and honest negotiations.*

The American Catholic laity has been as divided on war with Iran as it has been with Iraq. Writing in *Our Sunday Visitor*, journalist Russell Shaw illustrated that Catholic opinion ranged from peace groups, such as The Catholic Worker and Pax Christi, to traditional journalists Patrick Buchanan and Joseph Sobran, and to uncompromising support from Michael Novak and

George Weigel.

Traditional Catholic *just war* teaching holds that a first strike against Iran raises the same moral questions raised in Iraq. Just war theory involves military action in defense of an aggressor's attack. Proponents of pre-emption argue that allowing the enemy to strike first makes no sense when the first blow is likely to involve *weapons of mass destruction*. This raises questions concerning the nature, imminence and evidence of such an attack that must be considered before justifying any pre-emptive attack.

Unilateralism is also an issue. Would the United States be justified in going it alone in Iran, or would U.N. authorization be necessary to legitimize such an attack? The lack of U.N. authorization was one of the objections against the Iraq war raised by Vatican officials, including the then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Any use of nuclear weapons by the United States in a pre-emptive attack would be universally condemned.

Many critics also contend that an attack would unify Iran's cultural dissidents against the mullah and is rooted in the same misguided folly and conflicting intelligence that produced the Iraq war. An attack on Iran would probably solidify Iranian nationalism behind the current regime while acerbating the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The oil fields of the region would be destabilized, leading to triple digit per barrel oil prices. Russia and China would solidify their Marxist influences in Iran. Terrorist cells, which have already filtered into the United States because of government's refusal to protect American borders while democratizing the world, will embark on a revitalized campaign of terror that could endanger America's major cities. An attack on Iran could trigger retaliation with chemical and biological weapons including nerve gas, anthrax and powerful toxins.

The CIA says that Iran is at least ten years away from being a viable nuclear threat to the United States. Iran's persistent bellicosity could change American perception, especially if there were clear evidence that the country's Islamic rulers were close to acquiring nuclear weaponry or were planning to attack Israel. Then all bets would be off.

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## 50th ANNIVERSARY!

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We are thrilled that God has blessed CMF with 50 Years of service informing, educating and motivating! Yes, 2008 marks our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! It doesn't seem possible that we have been providing information on the many threats to our Faith, our Families and Country since 1958!

Watch for more news about this notable 50TH Anniversary!

## R.I.P.

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### HENRY HYDE 1924-2007

The late U.S. Congressman from Illinois was a valiant warrior in the fight to protect unborn children, and is considered a great statesman of our time. When President Bush honored Hyde with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, he said that Hyde was “a gallant champion of the weak and forgotten and a fearless defender of life in all its seasons.”

Perhaps Hyde's best remembered commentary on the issue of abortion is this quote:

When the time comes as it surely will, when we face that awesome moment, the final judgment, I've often thought, as Fulton Sheen wrote, that it is a terrible moment of loneliness. You have no advocates, you are there alone standing before God—and a terror will rip through your soul like nothing you can imagine. But I really think that those in the pro-life movement will not be alone.

I think there will be a chorus of voices that have never been heard in this world but are heard beautifully and clearly in the next world—and they will plead for everyone who has been in this movement. They will say to God, “Spare him because he loved us,”—God will look at you and say not, “Did you succeed?” but “Did you try?”

### PROVERBS 10:27

“The fear of the lord shall prolong days: and the years of the wicked shall be shortened.”

## DID YOU KNOW...

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That the state of California recently passed (and the Governor signed) a bill that demands a re-definition of marriage, and family, and amends the education code so “no teacher instruction and no school activity can reflect or promote a discriminatory bias against any person...who is homosexual, bisexual or transgender.”

—*Education Reporter, Jan '08*

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

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**PRAYERFUL THANKS** to each CMFer who offered prayers, greetings and gave donations to the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation during the recent Christmas season,

We are very grateful! We ask God to send you and yours many graces, good health and happiness in the New Year. CMF will confidently persevere in its apostolate of defending our Faith, Family life and Freedom, following the example of our saintly patron Cardinal Mindszenty.

## HEAR YE, HEAR YE...

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Constitutional Coalition's 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Education Policy Conference-January 24-26, 2008 at the Hilton-Frontenac Hotel in St Louis. Speakers, including Dinesh D'Sousa, M. Stanton Evans, Robert Spencer and many others, will address subjects of concern such as radical Islam, sexual deviancy, global warming, evolution, political correctness, immigration, education, multi-culturalism, historic leadership and more. This is a one-of-a-kind Conference which will inform and motivate you. Info: [www.constitutionalcoalition.org](http://www.constitutionalcoalition.org) or call 314-434-7028.

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