

TWO PROPHETIC WARS – PART I

There is much excitement among prophecy watchers as the political forces destined to invade Israel in the Last Days fall into alignment. All eyes are on the fulfillment of the Gog-Magog prophecy of Ezekiel 38. And truly, Iran and the other players are forming up for the big show. But careful reading of the Scriptures seems to tell us to expect another war first. While Ezekiel's War will unite Iran with the outer tier of Islamic nations, a priort conflict seems on the docket involving the inner-ring of Jew-hating Arab states. In this series we'll look at just how this may all shake out.

THE NEXT WAR

Scripture tells us clearly that the nation of Israel faces a tough road in the last days. It appears that there are two prophetic wars facing the Jewish nation before the return of Messiah Jesus. Most are aware of the famous Gog-Magog prophecies found in Ezekiel, chapters 38 & 39. Some of the players are clear, even after about 2,600 years; The Persia found in Scripture is modern day Iran. Ezekiel names other nations which today are the former Soviet Islamic Republics and various ethnic groups from Turkey. Then there is the matter of Magog. Many scholars identify that name with Russia but some believe that that designation is a clear indicates modern Turkey. But one thing is pointedly missing in this invasion scenario: Syria, Egypt and the Palestinians aren't mentioned! Yet we know from Micah 5, Isaiah 19, Ezekiel 31 and Obadiah that these nations will suffer devastating defeat after they come against God's people in the end times. Many have concluded that there will be a first war in which Israel will face this inner-ring of Arab / Islamic nations: Syria, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. After that, there will be a time of peace, after which Israel will face the infamous Gog-Magog invasion.

"Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more." With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you- the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarites, Gebal, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to lend strength to the descendants of Lot. Selah" (Psalm 83:4-8) Thus has been the battle cry of the Arab nations that surround the State of Israel ever since its modern inception in 1948. **"Let us destroy them as a nation"**, sounds very much like Iran's October 2005 call to "wipe Israel from the face of the earth", or the clause in the Palestinian Charter that denies Israel its right to exist. The Scripture is very specific. **Edom** refers to Jordan. The **Ishmaelites** are Saudi Arabia and Egypt. **Moab** is Jordan. The **Hagarites"** refers to the Egyptians and possibly other North African peoples. **Ammon** again refers to Jordan, **Philistia** is the Palestinians, **Tyre** is in Lebanon. Finally, **Assyria** takes in part of the areas of Syria, Iraq and Iran. Who can deny this is the purpose of these Arab / Muslim nations? Certainly not they! Arab maps today always show the Middle East with no nation of Israel.

So we know it is the purpose of Arab / Islam to drive Israel into the sea. Three wars have proved it. But who will be involved? Let's look at some of the usual suspects. Syria has been arming and preparing for war. Throughout the year, Russia has been equipping the Syrians with advanced weapons systems.¹ Damascus is the HQ of several terrorist organizations dedicated to the destruction of Israel. The Syrians have been encouraging the insurgency in Iraq and aiding terrorist operations in Israel. Since the mid-90s, plans for the next Arab war against Israel have been well known. In December of 1996, The U.S. House of Representatives' Task Force On Terrorism And Unconventional Warfare compiled a report revealing those plans. In short, they call for a Palestinian "uprising" to begin the festivities. Once the IDF is fully engaged internally against Palestinian Security Forces, Syrian and Egyptian forces would cross the border to finish the job.² Terrorism expert Joseph Bodansky has detailed how this scenario nearly played out several times during the Clinton and early Bush administrations.³

Even now, the Syrian situation is unstable. Syria is a client state of Iran, and supporter of Hezbollah, the Lebanese-based, worldwide terror organization. The Syrians are hip-deep in Lebanese politics and are not beyond using even assassination as a tool to advance their political ends. Pressure from the US, Britain, France and the UN has fed that instability. In the past; fearing war, many influential Syrian businessmen and politicians have removed themselves and their money from the country.⁴ Over the long-haul Syrian armed forces are preparing for war, taking on the latest Russian technology available. But these state-of-the-art anti-aircraft systems did them little good when the Israelis struck what was believed to be a Syrian nuclear facility earlier this year. In addition many terror organizations have made their headquarters in Damascus. These only somewhat controlled terror groups are a danger to the Syrians in that if they lash out at Israel it could draw Syria into a major conflict at the same time. Prophecy scholar Glenn Allen describes God's judgment on Syria for her next attempt to destroy God's People. Syria has waged war against Israel three times since the re-birth of that nation: In 1948, 1967 and 1973. The next war would be the fourth in the series. Here is what Amos 1:3-5 says. **“Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its *punishment*, Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron. But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad. I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus”**”. Allen contends that the next war will be that fourth and final war between Syria and Israel.

Scripture tells us of a Syrian invasion to come in the last days. The result will be that nation's utter defeat. **“And as I have purposed, so it shall stand: That I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot.”** (Isaiah 14:24-25) Of course, any Syrian invasion of Israel would come across the mountains to the north. Micah 5:6 speaks directly to Israel's triumph in this invasion. **“They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria, And the land of Nimrod at its entrances; Thus He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, When he comes into our land.”** The references to the **“land of Nimrod at its entrances”** suggests that Israel will at the same time deal with a threat across the Iraqi border, - or possibly is referring to that part of Syria that borders Iraq as the gateway or entrance of that Iraqi home of ancient Babylon. The war with Syria will also feature the destruction of the world's “...oldest perpetually inhabited city”; - Damascus. **“The burden against Damascus. “ Behold, Damascus will cease from *being* a city, And it will be a ruinous heap”**”. (Isaiah 17:1)⁵ Is this a nuclear attack against the Syrian capital? It may be so. Jeremiah 49:26-27 describes the scene. **“Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, And all the men of war shall be cut off in that day,” says the LORD of hosts. “ I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, And it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad.”**” What would prompt Israel to use its nuclear arsenal: One of two scenarios at least. As early as 1996, Syria was equipping their Scud-C missiles with VX nerve gas. At that time, the Israeli Government let it be known in unequivocal terms that the very existence of Damascus was at stake should the Syrians decide to use chemical weapons. The threat was repeated in November of 2000, when Israeli General Kaplinsky threatened to attack Damascus because of Syrian support for increasing terror at the hands of Hezbollah.⁶ The modernization of Syrian armament affected with Russian beginning in 2005, has led some in the Syrian General Staff to believe that they can now take on Israel on a more equal footing. Preparations for such a war are near at hand.

After the total destruction of Damascus foretold in Isaiah 17:1, the prophet goes on to detail more judgments in store for Israel's enemies. **“The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites,” declares the LORD Almighty.”** (Isaiah 17:2-3) The prophet here, is communicating God's judgment on more than just Syria. Aroer is in the southern central part of Jordan. Ephraim refers to the West Bank, the very center of Palestinian claimed land. Aram, again refers to the Syrians. The **“royal power”** or sovereignty of Syria seems to be compromised in this prophecy. The inclusion of Jordan and the Palestinians in the same verses as the Syrians suggests that the destruction of those particular enemies of Israel will occur at the same time, during a general Arab-Israeli War.

The prophet Obadiah deals with God's judgments on Edom, the modern-day Palestinians. In the first several verses he sets the tone. **“Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom...(“ Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle”): “ Behold,**

I will make you small among the nations; You shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you”. (Obadiah 1:3) Then the vision of Obadiah pronounces both judgment and sentence. To understand the Biblical language, recall that in the Old Testament, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Verse 10 gives the judgment. **“For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever.”** Obadiah 1:15 gives the time of and reason for the sentence. It will be executed as we approach the day of Christ’s return. **“For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.”** It is interesting too, the use of the term **“reprisal”**. That is the term often used by the media to describe the “cycle of violence”, as they would have it, between Israel and the Palestinians. Then in verses 17&18, we find the terms of the sentence: Total destruction. **“The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of Esau shall be stubble; They shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau,”** For the LORD has spoken.” The terms are stark indeed! Not one **“...shall remain of the house of Esau”**.

Of course this type of total annihilation is only possible if the Palestinian people are completely separated from the Jews. Intended or not, that is exactly what is being accomplished by Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza and the progressive and looming retreat from the West Bank and what remains of Samaria. It would be the Security Fence that enforces that separation. It becomes easy to imagine a scenario in which Palestinian terrorists perpetrate some egregious atrocity on Israel, with massive casualties, bringing the full destructive fury of the IDF upon the whole Palestinian population, thus fulfilling the prophecy. It is even easier to envision if the event occurs in the course of a war in which Israel is desperately engaged fighting for its very survival with Syria and other Arab nations. The sentence is confirmed in Isaiah 14:31. **“All you of Philistia are dissolved; For smoke will come from the North.”** The entire scenario is reviewed in Zechariah 9. Here the prophet pronounces again **“The burden of the word of the LORD”**, against Damascus, but this time adds Tyre and Sidon, in modern-day Lebanon, whose power **“...will be devoured by fire”**. Of course that is where Hezbollah has set up camp with its modernized rocket arsenal, - ready to launch against northern Israel. Zechariah goes on to pronounce against the Philistines (Palestinians) and states emphatically in 9:5, that **“The king shall perish from Gaza”**. No more Palestinian Authority, - it seems! Or perhaps this refers specifically to the rule of Hamas.

Obadiah describes the extent of Israel’s triumph. She will **“...possess the mountains of Esau”**, Philistia, (Palestine and Palestinian), Ephraim, Samaria and Gilead. The border of Israel shall extend all the way to Zarephath, which is well into Lebanon; **“And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s”**. (Obadiah 1:21)

Though the timing is less certain, judgment is proclaimed for Egypt also. Isaiah 19:1-3 reads, **“The burden against Egypt. Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst. “I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; Everyone will fight against his brother, And everyone against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst”**. It could be describing a scene of both nuclear destruction and civil war. We have seen the seeds of civil discord in the Arab/Islamic world sown by war and terrorism. Tens of thousands of Jordanians hit the streets to protest against al-Qaeda following bombings there. We’ve witnessed the civil violence in Iraq.

The outcome of the war against Syria, the Palestinians, Jordan, the terrorists of Lebanon and possibly Egypt is one of total victory for Israel. It brings a great annexation of ‘Promised’ land and a time of peace before the next war. One can only imagine the rage of the surviving Arab-Islamic nations, as they witness the destruction of Damascus, the utter defeat of Syria, and the annexation of parts of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the whole of Gaza and the West Bank. Isaiah 17 seems to tell us that it will lead to the hate-fueled invasion by the Gog-Magog alliance of Ezekiel 38. **“Oh the raging of many nations, - they rage like the raging sea...they roar like the roaring of great waters.”** (Isaiah 17:12) Yet before that invasion there will be a time of peace. When the next alliance comes against God’s People, Ezekiel 38:11 tells us, they will say to themselves, **“...‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates”**. That peace and sense of security is made

possible by Israel's total victory over the Palestinians and her other Arab neighbors, so totally dedicated to her destruction. Perhaps it is the time of the 7-year treaty confirmed by Antichrist, guaranteeing that peace. In the event, it leads to the great Gog-Magog invasion.

THE NEW NIE: A SECOND LOOK

The headline trumpeted by the Mainstream Media and the peaceniks that, - according to the latest National Intelligence Estimate, - Iran may have abandoned its 'military' nuclear program back in 2003, - is to say the least, - fraught with problems. First of all, as former Ambassador to the UN, John Bolton pointed out, the "distinction between 'civilian' and 'military' programs is highly artificial". Bolton explains that it has always been the 'civilian' program that has been most advanced.⁷ Enriching the uranium is the hard part. Once that is done Iran will be only months away from producing her own nuclear weapons. And Tehran is proceeding at full speed toward reaching that enrichment goal, - with President Ahmadinejad announcing last week that Iran is pressing on toward putting 50,000 centrifuges on line.⁸ In addition there is the agenda-driven, suspect authorship of the report. The Wall Street Journal points out that the three main authors of the NIE have "reputations as hyper-partisan anti-Bush officials". One of them, Vann Van Diepen, has been actively lobbying for Iran's right to enrich uranium. This, it seems, is all part of the historically documented State Department attempt to thwart Bush Administration policy on Iran.⁹

Problem two: It is likely not accurate. The Israelis, for one are not buying it. It is they that have the most vaunted intelligence service on the globe and a whole lot more at stake in getting it right. Israel claims that it has "incriminating" evidence that Iran is pushing for military nuclear capabilities in "specific ways". Israeli officials have pointed to the American report as politically motivated.¹⁰ British Intelligence is also skeptical that Iran has stopped its nuclear military program.¹¹ And days after the NIE release, Israel's new ambassador to London publicly warned Tehran that "if Iran does not cooperate, then military confrontation is inevitable". The Israelis believes Iran will be able to produce its' own nuclear weapons in a little more than a year.¹² In some sense that may all be somewhat irrelevant. This newsletter has documented in the past, how the Russians let slip that Iran has probably had nukes for some time now. A task force of the House of Representatives agreed, finding that Iran likely acquired its first nukes after the break up of the Soviet Empire in 1992. By 2004, Iran was testing intermediate range, Shihab-3 missiles with a "nuclear warhead casing" designed by the North Koreans.¹³ Even the new NIE states in Assessment B that "WE CANNOT RULE OUT THAT Iran has acquired,...or will acquire in the future – A NUCLEAR WEAPON".¹⁴

The unintended outcome of this attempt at political sabotage of Presidential policy is that tensions in the region have actually risen. The Iranians have thumbed their nose at the EU's attempts at diplomacy. The Israelis have warned of military consequences. President Bush said that his policy is unchanged. Key European nations like France and Germany have lined up behind the President. And the Russians are ominously on the move in support of the Iranian position. Moscow has launched a task force that includes an aircraft carrier and a guided missile cruiser into the Mediterranean, not far off the Israeli shore, - an area controlled by the US 6th Fleet.¹⁵ That seems to back the words of Russia's President Putin, who earlier this Fall, said that an attack on Iran would be considered an attack on Russia.¹⁶ Things are heating up. So the final effect of the report may be that it undermines the support necessary to get new international economic sanctions which are the last best hope of stopping the Mad Mullahs from acquiring a continuous supply of nuclear weapons. It has pulled the rug from under the military option which is the best leverage the West has to drive Iran to the negotiating table. And it has emboldened the Russians to flex their muscle and influence in the region. It may even force Israel to act alone in taking out the nuclear sites, - an event that could cause the Middle East to explode. And if this report purposely and inaccurately down plays the threat, - thus allowing Iran to 'get the bomb', - it is an act bordering on treason.

¹ Menevline, March 3, 2005

² "The Next Arab-Israeli War", by Emanuel A. Winston, A Middle East Analyst and Commentator, The Jewish Press, Week of January 31, 1997, Vol. XLVII, No. 5, p. 43 and 53, as detailed in Cutting Edge News, #1056 David Bay,

³ The High Cost of Peace: How Washington's Middle East Policy Left America Vulnerable to Terrorism: Yossef Bodansky, 2002 – A general reading of this book lends ample credence to this theme.

⁴ Syrian Bigwigs..., DEBKAFfile, November 1, 2005

⁵ Glenn Allen, The Destruction of Damascus

⁶ Glenn Allen, The Destruction of Damascus

⁷ John R Bolton, The Flaws In the Iran Report, Washington Post, December 5, 2007

⁸ Iran seeks at least 50,000 centrifuges, Middle East News, Monsters & Critics, December 5, 2007

⁹ Ed Lasky, The suspect provenance of the NIE report, American Thinker, December 5, 2007

¹⁰ Aaron Klein, Israel: Forget US intel..., World Net Daily, December 9, 2007

¹¹ Report: UK spy chiefs believe Iran 'deceived' CIA..., Y-Net News, December 9, 2007

¹² Coughlin & Sanger, Israel warns Iran to co-operate or pay price, The Age, (Australia), December 7, 2007

¹³ Smoking Gun Revelations..., Insight Magazine, December 5, 2007

¹⁴ Sean Osborne, The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate..., Northeast Intelligence, December 6, 2007

¹⁵ Russia launches first naval power build-up in the Mediterranean..., DEBKAFfile, December 5, 2007

¹⁶ Pepe Escobar, Attack Iran and you attack Russia, Asia Times, October 26, 2007