

Iran Sends Senior Ayatollah to Iraq

Russia Sends Carrier to Tartus

Two very disturbing reports from the Middle East today. First, Asharq al-Awsat is reporting that Iran is sending a senior Ayatollah to Iraq to be the Wali al-Faqih or Guardian of the Jurists. This is the same position that Ali Khamenei holds in Iran.

Speaking to Asharq Al-Awsat on the condition of anonymity, an Iranian dissident has revealed that Iran is seeking to increase its influence and control in Iraq, particularly in light of the imminent withdrawal of US troops from the country. The Iranian dissident claimed that Tehran has taken a number of decisions to secure its grip on neighboring Iraq, including intensifying its support for Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, courting Iraqi Shiite political leaders and parties, and most importantly appointing a senior Iranian Shiite cleric as the "Wali al-Faqih" or "Guardian of the Jurists" for Iraq, which is a move that would also serve to weaken the role of the Iraqi Shiite religious authority in Najaf – which is hostile to al-Maliki – by creating an alternative Shiite religious authority.

The Iranian source, who lives in Iran and has high-level contacts with the government there, told Asharq Al-Awsat that "due to the fact that the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq is imminent...and the al-Maliki government today is the weakest it has ever been, [Iranian Supreme Leader] Ayatollah Khamenei has taken a number of decisions as an urgent pre-emptive plan to counter the prospective challenges to Iranian influence in Iraq" adding that "the most important information in this regard is that which has been received from inside the Iranian regime regarding the appointment of Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi as Wali al-Faqih [Guardian of the Jurists] for Iraq."

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=27454>)

At the same time Debka is reporting that the Russians are sending their only aircraft carrier to the Mediterranean.

The Syrian crisis assumed a big power dimension this week with the build-up of rival United States and Russia naval air carrier armadas in Syrian waters, debkafile's military sources report.

The USS George H.W. Bush arrived Wednesday, Nov. 23, in the wake of the three Russian warships anchored earlier opposite Tartus which established a command post in the Syrian port. They will be augmented by Russia's only air carrier the Admiral Kuznetsov, which is due in mid-week.

<http://www.debka.com/article/21521/>)

Please read both articles for more important information, especially the Asharq al-Awsat article.

Analysis. The events occurring now remind me too much of the way World War One started. Once the great powers mobilized war was certain to occur. I would have expected that the Iranians would have waited a decent interval after the last US troops had departed Iraq to begin their consolidation of the Iraqi Shiites. It would appear that events in Syria and the actions of the Arab League in response has forced Iran to advance its timetable for the Shiite consolidation.

At the same time the Russians are positioning their only carrier near Tartus to force the United States and their allies, Israel and the Arab League, to consider having to fight Russia if they attack Syria. Unlike 1973, the Russian Army is not a threat to Western Europe. However, the Russians still maintain

a credible nuclear force. The Russians are putting us in the same position that Israel was in October, 1973 during the Yom Kippur War. The Soviets made it clear that if Sharon's armored columns continued to advance on Damascus, the Soviets would intervene to stop them. The Russians are sending the same message to the Arab League et. al. that if you attack Syria, Russia will respond. Given the current state of the Russian military, that response may well be nuclear.

According to the Debka article cited above, Israel, Turkey and Jordan have all gone to a high war alert after Assad's threats to retaliate against them for the murder of ten Syrian Air Force members a few days ago. (See also <http://www.debka.com/article/21519/>). Syria blames Turkey and Saudi Arabia with Jordan and perhaps Qatar and Oman as its agents for the current unrest. The defining event for the start of the rebellion in Syria was Assad's rejection of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia's "request" to throw the Iranians out of Syria. This occurred in February, 2009 when King Abdullah traveled to Damascus to make that request. It is bad karma to diss the King of Saudi Arabia when he comes to see you.

According to *The Coming Is Upon Us* (<http://atimetobetray.com/blog/iran-leaders-the-coming-is-upon-us-%E2%80%93-israel-shall-be-destroyed-watch-the-video/>), the last event that defines the time of the coming of the Mahdi is the death of King Abdullah. That could happen any time. Iran could attempt to "expedite" that event with an attempt to assassinate King Abdullah. While an assassination attempt would not surprise me, I do not rate it as a high probability. I suspect that the Iranians would rather that Allah take King Abdullah in his own time.

Another concept to understand is that the Iranians believe they are protected by Allah in their drive to bring forth the Mahdi. This fatalism that all is "Ins'Allah", the will of Allah, is very strong in the Islamic society. As long as the leadership of Iran truly believes that they are doing the will of Allah, threats of economic or military action will not deter them from accomplishing Allah's will. Iran must be physically stopped from obtaining a nuclear weapon that some sources believe they already have.

The World has come close to World War Three twice in my lifetime. The first time was during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. The second time was during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. I believe this will be the third time.