

## Persian Fire

Israel's special forces at the "highest stage of readiness"

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So now we know: Next time the fire will come in Iran. The blow will be delivered by proxy, but that will not spare the true perpetrator from the firestorm of blowback and unintended consequences that will follow. Even now, the gruesome deaths of many innocent people in many lands are growing in futurity's womb.

The Rubicon of the new war was crossed on Oct. 27. Oddly enough for this renewal of the ancient enmity between the heirs of Athens and Persia, the decisive event occurred on the edge of the Arctic Circle, at the Plesetsk Cosmodrome, where a Russian rocket lifted an Iranian spy satellite, the Sinah-1, into orbit. This launch, scarcely noticed at the time, has accelerated the inevitable strike on Iran's nuclear facilities: Israel is now readying an attack for no later than the end of March, The Sunday Times reports.

The order, from embattled Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, puts Israel's special forces at the "highest stage of readiness" for the strike. While Iran's plan to begin enriching uranium — which will give it the capability of building a nuclear bomb — is the precipitating factor, the budding Iranian space program is a "point of no return" for Sharon, and that is what is driving the actual timing of the strike. The Sinah-1 is just the first of several Iranian satellites set for Russian launches in the coming months.

Thus the Iranians will soon have a satellite network in place to give them early warning of an Israeli attack, although it will still be a pale echo of the far more powerful Israeli and American space spies that can track the slightest movement of a Tehran mullah's beard. What's more, late last month Russia signed a \$1 billion contract to sell Iran an advanced defense system that can destroy guided missiles and laser-guided bombs, the Sunday Times reports. This too will be ready in the next few months.

There is of course another "precipitating factor": the Israeli elections on Mar. 28. Sharon, who has left the Likud Party to form his own cult-of-personality party, faces a fractious electorate, with his former comrades guaranteeing an attack on Iran's nuclear sites if Sharon is too "weak" to do it before the vote. He may well decide to rally the nation — and stave off this lunge from the right — with a blow against Tehran. Such a move would doubtless be popular at home; everyone agrees that Iran cannot be allowed to have the kind of nuclear weapons that Israel itself possesses in such bristling abundance.

The move will be popular in Washington as well. Only a fool would believe that the fools in the Bush Regime have abandoned their bloody-minded ambitions for "full-spectrum dominance" in the Middle East, just because Iraq has turned to goo in their hands. To these schemers, Iraq has always been merely a stepping-stone toward the "far enemy," Iran. Indeed, they used Saddam himself for years as a useful stick to bash the Iranians, until he

stepped out of line with his attack on the Bush family's longtime business partners, the Kuwaiti royals. Murder, torture and military aggression are always welcome in the service of Washington's power elites, but defiance is not allowed.

Saddam's defiance lasted only a few months before he was broken in the first Gulf War, but Iran has thumbed its nose at Washington for 25 years. To the Potomac power-junkies, Iran has never been properly punished for dumping their puppet, the Shah, and seizing the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. (The 600,000 Iranians killed by Saddam's U.S.-backed armies don't count in this brutal calculus; the Tehran regime still stands, unrepentant.) Yes, these things matter to those who seek to mask their inadequacies and magnify their importance by identifying their own psyches with some mass, abstract entity — the nation, the volk, the ummah, the tribe, etc. Like Osama, still smarting from the Crusades, the Bushists are equally willing to kill innocent people to assuage the psychic pain of past "humiliations."

But while this endemic lunacy of our human kind plays its part, the real bottom line for the Bushists is, well, the bottom line. Iran itself is but a stepping-stone to the ultimate goal: putting U.S.-controlled hands on the spigots of Middle Eastern and Central Asian oil, thus providing a brake to control the political rise of China and India, and ensuring a "new American century" of unchallenged profit and privilege. For the elite, of course; as always, the suckers back home will get stuck with the bills and the body bags from these geopolitical games.

A nuclear-armed Iran would lie athwart this golden road to glory like a mighty Persian rampart, so the scaffolding must be swept aside soon, before the walls are complete. The Bush regime has already begun a "low-intensity" covert war against Iran, using the Mujahadeen el-Khalq terrorist group to map potential targets and carry out bombings, Common Dreams reports. MEK is a bizarre Iranian militarist cult that once murdered American officials, then allied with Saddam in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. Afterwards, they remained in Saddam's employ, acting as brutal enforcers in his crackdowns on Shiites and Kurds; the cruelty of their tortures was legendary. Yet Bush has eagerly taken these Saddamite terrorists into his service, Newsweek reports.

With hardline Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — yet another made-to-order goon ripe for demonizing — as frontman for an odious regime, Bush and Sharon will have little trouble whipping up war fever for the attack. In the next few months, we'll see the usual charade of "diplomacy" as military plans are finalized. But the fire is coming; the future is already groaning with death.

## Notes

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