



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 20 Number 20
February 12, 2025

Another Look at Why Iran Cannot Get the Bomb!

By Tal Davis

President Trump has in recent weeks declared that the United States will soon begin new negotiations with Iran. His goal is to force that radical Islamic country to desist in its arms and financial sponsorship of terrorism and terrorist organizations. Those include Hamas in Gaza and Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthis in Yemen. The Iranian government has tentatively agreed to meet and has said essentially that everything is on the table for discussion.

The Iranians' softening position may be due to the fact that the United States and Israel have demonstrated the ability to attack military targets inside Iran without resistance due to advanced stealth technological superiority. So the Iranians are willing to talk, except they refuse to balk on one subject, and this is the one that is most important. They will not stop and dismantle their centrifuges used to enrich uranium for nuclear reactors. They claim they are necessary for peaceful purposes. However, scientists all know that they can quickly be converted to enrich uranium to weapons grade levels for atomic bombs, something observers believe is Iran's ultimate aim. If Iran gets nuclear weapons it will seriously change the balance of power in the middle east. That will place Israel, and even other Muslim countries in that region (and the world), in grave jeopardy. Israel and the Trump Administration have declared that Iran will not be allowed to get nuclear weapons, and they will do whatever necessary to prevent it.

But as we have discussed before in this column, there is a much deeper reason for not allowing Iran's fanatical leaders to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction. It rests in the theological foundation of Shiite Islam that undergirds the ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran. To understand this ideology we must review a bit of history

Since 1979, Iran has been ruled by radical fanatical Shiite Mullahs (clerics). In that year, the late Ruhollah Moosavi

Khomeini (1902-1989) overthrew Shah (King) Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980) and established the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini was named the "Ayatollah" or "Supreme Leader." He immediately set up an oppressive authoritarian regime based on strict Islamic law. When he died in 1989 he was succeeded by Ali Hosseini Khamenei (b. 1936). The Ayatollah is not involved in the daily business of the government which is administered by an elected parliament, president, and cabinet (all from the only legal party). The Supreme Leader, nonetheless, reserves absolute authority for the regime's ideology and must approve all elected top officials and major policy decisions.

The danger for the world is that the rulers of Iran are followers of an extreme version of Shiite Islam called "Twelver Shiite Islam." As you may know, the religion of Islam is divided into two major sects, Sunnis and Shiites. They both agree on the basic essential doctrines of Islam such as the nature of God, the annual Hajj to Mecca, the authority of the Prophet Muhammad (A.D. 570-632), and the written Qur'an. About 85% of Muslims are Sunnis and about 12% Shiite.

According to Islamic historians, Islam was founded by Muhammad in the seventh century A.D. in Arabia (now Saudi Arabia). Many non-Muslim historians dispute the accuracy of the details of his life and the development of the Qur'an. Following Muhammad's death in AD 632, disagreements arose over the successor to Muhammad as caliph (leader) of the movement. Most Muslims followed Muhammad's cousin, Abu Bakr, as the first post-Muhammad caliph. Bakr died in AD 634 and was followed as caliph by Umar (634-644).

The third caliph after Muhammad was Uthman, a son-in-law of the prophet. He died in AD 656. He was succeeded by another son-in-law named Ali ibn Abi Talib, the husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima by his first wife

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Khadija. He was murdered in AD 661 and was followed as caliph by Mu'awiya. But not all Muslims followed his leadership. Thus, the Sunni/Shiite split soon began. Muslims who favored Mu'awiya and the continued Caliphate became known as the Sunnis (Traditionalists). Their view is that Islam's leaders are selected by a consensus of the Muslim faithful. Eventually the political unity of an overarching caliphate dissipated. Today, no world caliphate exists, and Islamic authority is widely defused among many teachers and countries. Only the basic Islamic religious dogmas continue to unite all Muslims.

Nonetheless, the followers of the murdered Ali claimed that all true divinely inspired supreme leaders of Islam, which they termed "Imams," had to be direct descendants of Muhammad through the line of his first wife Khadija and their daughter Fatima. Thus, Ali was regarded as their first legitimate Islamic Imam, and so they became known as the "Shia" or "Party" of Ali. The three caliphs who preceded him are regarded as all illegitimate.

According to Shiite history, the second true Imam was Ali's oldest son, and Muhammad's grandson, Hasan. Hasan was a weak leader and only ruled for seven months before being forced out in AD 662. Hasan was followed by his younger brother, Husayn. He, however, was beheaded with his family in the Battle of Karbala in AD 680 while trying to reunite all Muslims under his leadership. Shiites regard Husayn as a great martyr for their faith, and each year commemorate his death with processions of men whipping themselves in a reenactment of his suffering.

Ali, Hasan, and Husayn, according to Shiite doctrine, were followed by nine other Imams. This line of succession is the primary factor dividing Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Shiites believe their twelve Imams all had special divine authority. Sunnis do not.

Here is a list of the Twelve Imams of Shiite Islam along with the dates of their births and deaths.

1. Ali ibn Abu Talib (600-661)
2. Hasan ibn (son of) Ali (624-669)
3. Husayn ibn Ali (626-680)
4. Ali ibn Husayn (658-712)
5. Muhammad ibn Ali (677-732)
6. Ja'far ibn Muhammad (702-765)
7. Musa ibn Ja'far (744-799)
8. Ali ibn Musa (765-817)
9. Muhammad ibn Ali (810-835)
10. Ali ibn Muhammad (827-868)
11. Hasan ibn Ali (846-874)
12. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (868-?)

In AD 874, the Twelfth Imam, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, inexplicably disappeared. However, the "Twelver" Shiites, like those now ruling Iran, believe al-Hasan is still alive and has been in hiding ("Occultation") for over 1150 years. At the end of days, he will return, with Jesus, to the world stage as the "Mahdi" or "The Guided One." This returned divinely endowed al-Hasan will lead the armies of Islam to victory over the forces of evil. All countries, religions, or armies not embracing their form of Islam will be destroyed in an apocalyptic war.

So now we come back to the present. Remember, Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei, and all the current leaders of Iran, are fanatical Twelver Shiites. They truly believe that the time for the Mahdi's return is in the near future. A key dimension of this Shiite doctrine is that prior to his appearing, the world will engage in a great war between the forces of good (Islam) and the forces of evil (everyone else). The Twelfth Imam will therefore lead the forces of Allah to utter victory. These people don't just believe it's true, they know it's true!

In light of these startling facts, we must say that, indeed, the Iranians cannot be allowed to get nuclear weapons. If they do so, they will be emboldened to think that it is their divine duty to instigate the events leading to the final great battle of history and the return of the Twelfth Imam. They will likely start my attacking their most sworn and hated enemy: Israel. The Iranians believe their victory is inevitable since the Mahdi will come to lead them. They also believe that a world war must precede his revealing, so they will seek to widen the war, attacking other non-

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Islamic countries, and even Muslim nations they regard as apostates. If the fanatical Iranian Mullahs obtain weapons of mass destruction, they see it as a sign from Allah to start the final world war.

In conclusion then, any agreements made with the Iranians must include the total elimination and destruction of

all their machinery designed to enrich nuclear materials. There must be full and open inspections. Although Ayatollah Khamenei has publicly condemned nuclear weapons, he and his regime have already proven they cannot be trusted to honor pledges they made in the past. The security, not just of the USA and Israel, but of the whole world depends on it.

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