



PERSPECTIVES

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The Chaotic Arab World Has Nothing to Offer Israel

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Israel should not do the bidding of the divided and bankrupt Arab world and strive to contain Tehran's hegemonic ambitions at an exorbitant human and material cost. Nor should it trust its Arab neighbors to offer genuine peace once the Iranian threat is eliminated.

Behavioral science recognizes two types of response to tense or threatening situations facing loosely connected groups. The first is characterized by the group's uniting under a charismatic leader who radiates power, wisdom, organizational acumen, and the ability to protect his followers. Provided such a leader is available, this kind of group forms a united front and prepares for the struggle against the looming threat. The opposite occurs when there is no such leader to be found. In the resulting mayhem, members betray one another and try to escape to the other side in order to save themselves. In that second scenario, the individuals in the group couldn't care less if the rest of the group goes to hell.

The second scenario is an exact description of the current situation in the Arab world, in which Iran has become a major threat. After years of trying to extend its control over the Arab nations, Tehran's hegemonic ambitions grew by leaps and bounds when the two major world powers joined forces to empower it. Under President Obama, US actions strengthened Iran, allowed it to develop nuclear weapons (the real meaning of the 2015 agreement), ignored its ballistic missile development program, handed it vast sums of money, and allowed it to sign lucrative contracts – all while ignoring Tehran's involvement in local wars and support for world terror.

Moscow has been Tehran's partner for years through a complex array of agreements and joint initiatives. It supplied nuclear power stations for electricity

production, thereby granting the Iranians the ability to acquire knowledge and experience in nuclear science; handed over its missile technology; worked with Iran to regulate the world natural gas market (Russia, Iran, and Qatar are the world's three largest gas suppliers); and joined forces with Tehran in the Syrian civil war in an attempt to save the Assad regime.

The EU followed the US and Russia in their promotion of Iranian interests, encouraging its members to join the lucrative Iranian contract-signing queue. (In truth, a good number of European states already had a history of ignoring economic sanctions imposed on Tehran by the West.) US Intelligence knew exactly what was going on but said nothing – or, to be more accurate, was silenced by the Obama administration.

Other economic giants took part in the Iran festival. China never quite understood why it should limit its economic ties to Tehran; nor did India find it a problem to maintain wide-ranging business interests in the country.

The Arab world, from Iraq in the east to Morocco in the west, from Syria in the north to Yemen in the south, has been noting the growing Shiite advance with undisguised apprehension. Sunni Muslim states such as Turkey and Pakistan (in fact, most Sunni Muslims) are anxious, but are reacting to the situation by collapsing instead of unifying and working together.

This collapse is both internal and external in every country, resulting in endless arguments about how each nation should react to the state of emergency. The question is whether it is better to act against Iran in some way – economically, politically, militarily – or end the problem by yielding to Tehran and saving lives.

Qatar threw in the towel years ago. The emirate shares a gigantic gas field with Iran, where they produce gas in partnership and share the huge profits. Qatar's behavior infuriates the Saudis because the emirate is Arab, Sunni, and Wahhabi, as is the Saudi royal family, but has nevertheless stabbed the Saudis in the back. Saudi furor at Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood and for the shenanigans of Al Jazeera are nothing compared to its anger over Qatari cooperation with Iran.

The Sunni minority in Iraq, once the country was freed in 2003 by the US-led international coalition from Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship, saw the government handed over to the Shiite majority on a silver platter (made in the West and covered in the blood of American and Western soldiers) before being caught in the Iranian net. Tehran now controls politicians, parties, army officers, militias, and industries in Iraq. It has thus reestablished the hegemony it had in eastern Mesopotamia before the Arabs defeated the Sassanian Persian Empire's forces in Qadisiya, a city in southern Iraq, in November 636 – 1,381 years ago.

The Persians never forgave the Arabs for this defeat. The ayatollahs see Iran's takeover of Iraq as an act of historic justice and long overdue revenge on the Arabs, whom they continue to consider primitive illiterates.

Syria, another Arab state, became an Iranian stooge after being totally destroyed by a blood-soaked civil war that led to the deaths of over half a million people, most of whom were Sunni. They died so Shiite Islam could annex their land as well. The Iranians owe a debt of gratitude to the Russian and Christian unbelievers who did the dirty work of eliminating the opposition, right down to its women and children.

Lebanon, another Arab state with a large Shiite population (possibly the majority by now due to its own demographics and the flight of Sunni Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Alawites from its borders) has an armed-to-the-teeth, Iranian-created and -controlled militia, Hezbollah, the fighting strength of which is greater than that of the Lebanese army. Iran has effectively controlled Lebanon for 35 years. The world knew, watched, and remained silent.

Yemen, another Arab state with a large Shiite population, was never really united. It was always divided by the different tribal, ethnic, and ideological loyalties of its population. That allowed Tehran to establish a state within a state with a well-equipped army that took over the capital and exiled the country's president and government to Saudi Arabia. Iran now threatens international navigation in the Red Sea and the Mandeb Straits, essential passages connecting Europe, the Persian Gulf (with its oil and gas), and eastern Asia, with its merchandise and raw products.

Iran has even infiltrated the Palestinian Authority by supporting the Islamic Jihad and Hamas terror organizations. Erdoğan's Turkey, too, has joined the list of states that do Tehran's bidding and try to find favor in its eyes.

Iran has managed to gain control over the entire Muslim east, country by country, despite tough sanctions imposed by the West. In the process, it has caused much tension in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the Emirates, Israel, and other Mediterranean states. That tension has a negative effect on the internal workings of these states, and the recent Saudi purges are a corollary of it.

An acrimonious debate is raging within the Saudi royal family on the way the monarchy has responded to the Iranian threat in general and the Iranian takeover of Yemen in particular, a development that poses an immediate threat to the Saudis, who have had rockets launched in their direction. The war in Yemen, like the support for the defeated Syrian rebels, has cost the Saudi treasury billions of dollars so far and if continued, will leave the country on the verge of bankruptcy.

Concurrent with this debate is the controversy over Saudi succession. Crown Prince Muhammad, son of the reigning monarch Salman, is 32 years old and has no administrative, political, or military expertise. There is a slew of much older cousins who have a good deal more experience than he does in the economic, administrative, and political spheres. In a traditional tribal society, age, experience, maturity, and a suitable personality are what make someone a legitimate leader, and Muhammad is not legitimate in the eyes of many of his cousins. It is quite possible that a putsch is in the making. He has, however, won the first round by arresting or eliminating several potential critics.

Tehran's pressure on Riyadh destabilizes the monarchy. That is what is happening in Lebanon as well, where the airing of the government's internal problems led Prime Minister Hariri to resign (temporarily). The situation in Iraq is also far from tranquil; angry arguments are raging about continued Iranian interference in the running of the country.

In response to the state of internal and inter-Arab mayhem, the Saudis called an emergency meeting of the Arab League foreign ministers. The Arab League is powerless. This paralytic organization has been unable to save a single Syrian, Iraqi, Yemenite, Libyan, Algerian, or Sudanese Arab in all the years of civil strife that have ravaged those countries.

Many Israelis have been encouraging their government to enter into an accord with the "Moderate Sunni Nations" because "Israel is not the problem, it is the solution." This is based on a deep lack of understanding of the Arab way of doing things and complete ignorance about what is really going on in the countries surrounding Israel.

The only conclusion Israel should reach from the Middle East's sad state of affairs is this: There is no one to rely on in the splintered Sunni Arab world, a world that is incapable of uniting against the Iranian threat. The Arabs betray one another, and some of them are tied to Tehran with every fiber of their beings. Are they really going to be loyal to whatever agreement they make with the Jews? They may ask the Israelis to save them from the clutches of the Iranian threat, but after they have done so at a high cost to their own sons and daughters, citizens, infrastructure, and cities, that "Moderate Sunni Axis" will treat the Jewish state exactly as it treated the Iraqi Kurds after they shed the blood of over a thousand male and female fighters to rescue the Arabs from ISIS. They threw them and their aspirations for independence into the dustbin of petty politics, interests, cynicism, and treachery.

Israel's fate will be just the same once the Iranian threat has been eliminated from whatever is left of the destroyed, bankrupt, and divided Arab world. Israel should not spend a plug nickel in the quest for peace with a world as

fragmented as the Arab world. Not one square centimeter of land for a worthless piece of paper containing the word “peace.”

Israel should ask the Arabs a single question: What are you giving us in exchange for our agreeing to make peace with you? The answer is clear. Apart from poverty, hatred, treachery, neglect, cynicism, and hypocrisy, the Arab world has nothing to offer Israel, because these are its only commodities. These are Israel’s neighbors, and when Israelis begin to understand this, they will be capable of dealing with those neighbors as they should.

An earlier version of this article, translated by Rochel Sylvetsky, was published by Arutz Sheva

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