

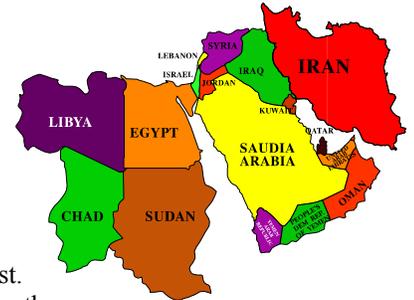


THE MIDDLE EAST WAR ON CHRISTIANS

April 17, 2014 The WSJ reported: "This week, as Jews celebrate the Passover holiday, they are commemorating the Bible's Exodus story describing a series of plagues inflicted on ancient Egypt that freed the Israelites, allowing them to make their way to the Holy Land. But over the past century, another exodus, driven by a plague of persecution, has swept across the Middle East and is emptying the region of its Christian population. The persecution is especially virulent today.

The Middle East may be the birthplace of three monotheistic religions, but some Arab nations appear bent on making it the burial ground for one of them...

In the rubble of Syrian cities like Aleppo and Damascus, Christians who refused to convert to Islam have been kidnapped, shot and beheaded by Islamist opposition fighters. In Egypt, mobs of Muslim Brotherhood members burn Coptic Christian churches in the same way they once obliterated Jewish synagogues. And in Iraq, terrorists deliberately target Christian worshippers...



Christians are losing their lives, liberties, businesses and their houses of worship across the Middle East.

It is little wonder that native Christians have sought refuge in neighboring countries—yet in many cases they find themselves equally unwelcome. Over the past 10 years, nearly two-thirds of Iraq's 1.5 million Christians have been driven from their homes. Many settled in Syria before once again becoming victims of unrelenting persecution. Syria's Christian population has dropped from 30% in the 1920s to less than 10% today."...

RUSSIA SHOULD BE READY FOR NON-CONTACT WAR

April 16, 2014 SpaceDaily.com The future of the Russian armed forces lies in developing high-precision 'smart' weapons and boosting the capacity to conduct no-contact warfare, a Russian deputy prime minister in charge of the defense industry said on Saturday.

"Old-fashioned army and fleet, organized in accordance with 20th century examples, will lose a war before they are face to face with the enemy. The era of high-precision long-range weapons has arrived. The future lies in smart weapons," Dmitry Rogozin told students in the Urals city of Chelyabinsk.

The deputy prime minister, who oversees Russia's defense and space industry, said Russia would invest 20 trillion rubles (\$561 billion) in the coming years in modernizing its army and fleet.

In addition, 3 trillion rubles (\$84 billion) will be invested in modernizing production at Russian defense plants.

The Russian armed forces are expected to become one of the world's best by 2020, Rogozin said.

Russia plans to organize a permanent base on the moon rather than leave it after several successful missions, the Russian deputy defense minister in charge of defense and space industries said. "The moon is not an intermediate point in the [space] race, it is a separate, even a self-contained goal. It would hardly be rational to make some ten or twenty flights to the moon, and then wind it all up and fly to the Mars or some asteroids.

This process has the beginning, but has no end: we are going to come to the moon forever," Dmitry Rogozin said in an article to be published by the government daily Rossiiskaya Gazeta on Friday. A mission to the Moon has become one of Russia's top space priorities.

Russian Space Agency Roscosmos said earlier this week it had launched a project to design a spacecraft suitable for moon missions and a super-heavy carrier rocket to deliver it there.

Russia plans to launch three lunar spacecraft - two to surface and one to orbit - by the end of the decade."

EDWARD LUCAS: HISTORIANS MAY LOOK BACK AND SAY THIS WAS THE START OF WORLD WAR III

April 16, 2014 dailymail.co.uk reported: "Deep in the flat and featureless landscape of eastern Ukraine, it is all too possible that the outline of World War III is taking shape. Whipped up by the Kremlin –propaganda machine and led by Russian –military intelligence, armed men are erecting road blocks, storming police stations and ripping down the country's flag.

They are demolishing not just their own country — bankrupt, ill-run and beleaguered — but also the post-war order that has kept most of Europe and us, here in Britain, safe and free for decades. Vladimir Putin is striking at the heart of the West.

His target is our inability to work with allies in defence against common threats. The profoundly depressing fact is that the events of the past few months, as Russia has annexed the Crimea and –suppressed opposition in Ukraine, have shown the West to be divided, humiliated and powerless in the face of these land grabs.

We are soon to face a bleak choice. We can chose to surrender any responsibility we have to protect Ukraine and the Baltic states — almost certainly Putin's next target — from further Russian incursion. Or we can mount a last-ditch attempt to deter Russia from furthering its

imperial ambitions. Putin knows that. And he believes we will choose surrender. For the real story of recent events in Ukraine is not about whether that country has a free-trade deal with Brussels or gets its gas from Moscow.

It is about brute power. It is about whether Putin's Russia — a rogue state on Europe's doorstep — can hold its neighbours to ransom, and whether we have the will to resist him. So far the answer to the first question is yes. And to the second a bleak no.

The Russian leader believes the collapse of the Soviet Union was a 'geopolitical catastrophe'. He believes Russia was stripped of its empire by the West's chicanery. And quite simply, he wants it back.

When the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, the former captive nations of Eastern Europe scrambled into Nato and the protection it offered as fast as they could."..."

AL-QAIDA HOLDS LARGEST, MOST DANGEROUS GATHERING IN YEARS

April 16, 2014 The Jerusalem Post reported: "A civilian video has surfaced on YouTube illustrating the largest gathering of al-Qaida in years, reported CNN on Tuesday. The meeting, which reportedly took place in Yemen, shows Nasser al-Wuhayshi a man known to be al-Qaida's second in command, a man who, according to CNN, has previously announced his determination to attack the United States.

According to the international news organization, either the US was not aware of the dangerous meeting, or was not notified with enough time to attack.

'We must eliminate the cross,' says the al-Qaida leader in a speech in the video. 'The bearer of the cross is America.'

US officials believe the professionally produced video is recent, says CNN, and that an attack could be in planning stages..."

NORTH KOREA VOWS SEOUL WILL PAY 'DEAR PRICE' FOR INSULTS

April 15, 2014 SpaceDaily.com reported: "North Korea on Monday warned South Korea it would pay a 'dear price' for recent criticisms of Pyongyang's nuclear programme and political system, saying they violated a no-slander agreement.

The warning from the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) came days after Pyongyang blasted South Korean President Park Geun-Hye's proposals for Korean reunification as the 'daydreams of a psychopath'.

Park was again the focus of the North's anger, with the CPRK denouncing comments she made during a recent tour of Europe.

'Our servicemen and people ... will never tolerate the enemy forces' attempts to insult our system and will make sure they pay a dear price for their madcap comments,' the committee said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

During her tour, Park had warned that Pyongyang's nuclear material could end up in terrorist hands and warned of a possible Chernobyl-style disaster at the North's main nuclear complex. The CPRK also took issue with Park's 'viciously slanderous remarks' regarding political repression and human rights abuses in North Korea.

'This shows Park is the true kingpin and major culprit of slanderous insult,' it said..."

FM: ISRAEL CLOSE TO FORGING NEW TIES ACROSS ARAB WORLD

April 15, 2014 Voice of America News reported: "Israel is holding secret talks with some Arab States that do not recognize it, looking to establish diplomatic ties based on a common fear of Iran, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said on Monday. Among the countries he was in contact with were Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Lieberman told newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth - the first such disclosure by a senior Israeli official.

The two nations swiftly denied the existence of any talks with Israel. Both these states, along with most other Arab nations, have traditionally been highly hostile towards Israel, which has only signed peace deals with two neighbors - Egypt and Jordan. However, anti-Israeli sentiment was being superseded by a growing concern over Iran's nuclear program, Tehran's regional allies, and the menace of Islamist militancy, Lieberman said.

'For the first time there is an understanding there that the real threat is not Israel, the Jews or Zionism. It is Iran, global jihad, [Lebanese Shi'ite guerrilla group] Hezbollah and al Qaeda,' the foreign minister said..."

DEADLY VIRUS SURGES THROUGH ARAB GULF

April 15, 2014 Voice of America News reported: "Saudi Arabia says a deadly virus is rippling through the kingdom as additional cases were reported over the weekend in the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Confirmed cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS, have been seen at two major hospitals in the port city of Jeddah. Saudi health authorities are embarking on a variety of measures to prevent further spread of the 18-month-long outbreak.



'We have detected 11 cases of (the virus) in Jeddah,' said Dr. Abdul Salam Noorwali, director-general of health in the Makkah region said last week. 'Two of the patients have died, while six others have been cured and three cases are under medication,' he said.

Three of the patients in Jeddah were health workers, including one of the two who died, prompting authorities to temporarily shut down the emergency ward at the city's King Fahd Hospital..."

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