



# PROPHETIC TIMES

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## **A nuclear war with the US is more likely than ever, Russia warns**

March 23, 2023 *jpost.com* reported: “Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Wednesday that the risk of a nuclear clash was at its highest level in decades, warning that Moscow was in a ‘de-facto’ open conflict with Washington over the war in Ukraine.

Relations between Russia and the United States, long strained, have worsened even further since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year. In February, Moscow pulled out of the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty with Washington.

Speaking at an event entitled ‘A World Without START: What’s Next,’ Ryabkov said there was ‘no question’ of Russia restoring the treaty for now, criticizing what he called Washington’s ‘hostile course’ towards Moscow.

‘I wouldn’t want to dive into a discussion about whether the likelihood of a nuclear conflict is high today, but it is higher than anything we have had for the past few decades, let’s put it that way,’ the *Interfax* news agency quoted him as saying...”



*Russian Deputy Foreign Minister  
Sergei Ryabkov*

## **Paganism is on the rise—here’s where to discover its traditions**

March 22, 2023 *nationalgeographic.com* reported: “Centuries ago, Wiccans traveled windy moors to worship the Horned God. Ancient Egyptians crossed deserts to invoke the protection of Isis. Druids journeyed to a forest clearing to perform rituals under the moon. But over time, such deities faded into myth; the rituals went underground.

Recently, however, a resurgence of interest in Pagan practices—crystals and tarot cards, astrology, and herbal magic—has brought Paganism from the fringes back to the center of pop culture, or at least to the top of your TikTok feed.

At least 1.5 million people in the United States identify as Pagans—up from 134,000 in 2001. They range from Wiccans and Kemetics to TikTok witches and heathens. (See explainer of these groups below.)

“There is, in general, a move away from organized religions and toward spirituality,” says Helen Berger, an author and sociologist of contemporary Paganism and witchcraft. Female empowerment and gay rights movements, the climate crisis, and a desire for a more life-affirming religion have fueled interest in the growing spiritual community, she adds...”

## **Iron Dome shot down Hamas drone over Gaza**

March 22, 2023 *jpost.com* reported: “The IDF Iron Dome shot down a drone launched by Hamas over the southern Gaza strip on Wednesday, according to the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit. The drone did not cross into Israeli territory and did not threaten Israeli residents in the area surrounding the Gaza strip.

Explosions were heard throughout the Eshkol Regional Council, according to *KAN News*. Palestinian media in Gaza reported the sound of explosions east of Rafiah and that the IDF had fired two missiles toward the direction of Khan Yunis and western Rafiah.

Yesterday, IDF soldiers arrested two Palestinians who attempted to infiltrate into Israel from the northern Gaza Strip...”

## **Poland slams ‘dangerous’ Russia-China ‘axis’**

March 22, 2023 *spacewar.com* reported: “Poland’s prime minister on Wednesday branded the China-Russian alliance ‘dangerous’ after Chinese leader Xi Jinping wrapped up a three-day visit to Moscow.

‘The Chinese president’s visit to Moscow makes us anxious, this China-Moscow axis is dangerous,’ Mateusz Morawiecki told reporters after hosting Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Warsaw.

Xi left Russia on Wednesday following a summit with President Vladimir Putin that hailed a ‘new era’ in their relations, putting on a display of unity against the West.

Putin and Xi discussed the war in Ukraine, but their talks ended with no apparent signal of a breakthrough on how to end the fighting. Putin praised Beijing’s 12-point position paper on the conflict, which includes a call for dialogue and respect for all countries’ territorial sovereignty.

But Poland, one of Ukraine’s closest allies, raised alarm about the increased cooperation between Beijing and Moscow...”

## **Putin, Xi hold ‘thorough’ talks on Chinese plan for Ukraine-Russia peace**

*March 21, 2023 jpost.com* reported: “The Kremlin said on Tuesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping had held a ‘thorough’ exchange of views during their first day of talks and had discussed Beijing’s peace plan for Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to give further details, telling reporters to wait for a joint statement later on Tuesday after the two leaders meet for a second day of talks.

‘There was a very thorough exchange of views, a serious conversation in the informal part,’ he said, referring to Monday’s meeting.

He said the two leaders had talked about China’s proposal – a 12-point paper calling for de-escalation and eventual ceasefire in Ukraine – but again declined to elaborate. Putin said on Monday he had carefully studied China’s ideas, viewed them with respect and would discuss them with Xi...”

## **Xi Jinping in Russia: China Will ‘Stand Guard over the World Order’**

*March 21, 2023 theguardian.com* reported: “Russian leader Vladimir Putin lavished praise on visiting Chinese dictator Xi Jinping on Monday as Xi began his visit to Moscow.

While Xi’s public statements upon arrival were mostly about the growing partnership between China and Russia, Putin played his part as the junior partner in the new axis of tyranny, gushing over the Chinese leader and promising ‘clarification’ for why Putin made things awkward for Beijing by invading Ukraine...

Xi is clearly still hoping to build on momentum from the China-brokered rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, perhaps hoping that China could cement its position as the new dominant global power by negotiating an end to Putin’s Ukraine war while the Biden administration glares sullenly from the sidelines.

Xi said when he landed in Moscow that his regime is ready to ‘stand guard over the world order based on international law’ and ‘resolutely defend the U.N.-centric international system,’ which seems like a hollow boast for a leader who refuses to denounce an invasion the U.N. has resoundingly condemned on several occasions over the past year...”

## **After Saudi-Iran deal: Iranian President invited to visit Saudi Arabia**

*March 20, 2023 israelnationalnews.com* reported: “Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has ‘welcomed’ an invitation from Saudi Arabia’s King Salman to visit the kingdom following the reconciliation deal between the two countries, an Iranian official said Sunday, according to *AFP*.

‘In a letter to President Raisi... the King of Saudi Arabia welcomed the deal between the two brotherly countries (and) invited him to Riyadh,’ tweeted Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president’s deputy chief of staff for political affairs, adding that ‘Raisi welcomed the invitation’.

News of the invitation to Raisi comes days after the countries announced on March 10 a Chinese-brokered deal to restore ties, seven years after they were severed.

Riyadh cut relations after Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in 2016 following the Saudi execution of revered Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr...”

## **Iranian supreme leader calls for cooperation among US-sanctioned states**

*March 17, 2023 jpost.com* reported: “In a meeting with the Belarusian president on Monday, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on states facing sanctions from the West to unite in order to neutralize the effects of the sanctions.

‘The countries that have been sanctioned by the United States must cooperate with each other and form a united front to destroy the weapon of sanctions,’ Khamenei said. ‘We believe that such a thing is achievable.’

In addition to discussing sanctions, Khamenei and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko signed seven memorandums of understanding between the two countries. Khamenei argued that the sanctions imposed on Iran had allowed the country to develop independently. ‘The severe sanctions made Iran aware of its capabilities and internal strengths,’ he said. ‘The sanctions provided the ground for many developments in Iran and our country was able to advance outstandingly in various fields.’

Until the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Iran held the title of the world’s most sanctioned nation. The US has sanctioned Iran since 1979, when 52 American diplomats and citizens were taken hostage by a radical student group. More recent sanctions on Iran have related to the country’s support of terrorism and development of a nuclear program...”



*Ayatollah Khamenei*

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