

Bad Actor

WITH ITS TIES TO TERRORISM AND PURSUIT OF NUKES, IRAN IS THE MAIN DESTABILIZING INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Some analysts have suggested that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be a key factor in stabilizing Iraq and solving other unrelated conflicts in the Middle East.

While achieving peace between Israel and the Palestinians is an important goal, this argument ignores the central role that Iran is playing in destabilizing the region.

From Iraq to Lebanon, the Islamic Republic is stirring sectarian tension, pushing for political upheaval and sponsoring terrorism, all the while pursuing the atomic capability that would give it a freer hand to step up its radical foreign policy agenda.

Iran Has Undermined Efforts to Resolve the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself is a case study in how Iran wields its influence to foment conflict in the Middle East.

Iran has funded, armed and inspired Palestinian terrorists, undermining international attempts to build support for a two-state solution to the dispute.

Nowhere is Iran's contempt for this vision more apparent than in the public pronouncements of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has repeatedly denied Israel's legitimacy and called for its elimination.

But Iran's support for Palestinian terrorists transcends words.

As the United States and the European Union are seeking to isolate Hamas, which refuses to recognize Israel and to end terrorism, Iran has funneled \$120 million since January to fund Hamas ministers and security forces.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly complained to foreign nations about Iran's intervention in internal Palestinian affairs and has sent top aides to press Hizballah, the Lebanon-based terrorist army supported by Iran, to stop providing funds to Palestinian terrorist groups.

Iran is Interfering in Iraq and Lebanon

The reach of Iran's destabilizing power is also evident today in Lebanon, where the Iranian-backed terrorist army Hizballah is trying to bring down the democratic government.

Hizballah this month sent its supporters into the streets of Beirut, causing Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and his aides to take refuge for their safety.

Lebanon has also told the United Nations that Iran and Syria are violating a U.N. Security Council arms embargo against Hizballah by funneling rockets and other weapons to the terrorist group via the Lebanese-Syrian border.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, Hizballah-trained

militias are using Iranian-supplied weapons, such as advanced improvised explosive devices and anti-tank weapons, in order to attack and kill American soldiers attempting to rebuild the country.

Iran's Nuclear Program Threatens Middle East Stability

U.S. officials believe that Iran's greatest threat to Middle East stability is embodied by its unyielding quest for atomic arms.

For the past four years, Iran has rejected a string of U.N. calls for an end to its uranium enrichment activities.

Disturbed by the prospect of a region in which Iran is the only declared nuclear power, numerous Arab nations have suggested that they may revisit their decisions against acquiring nuclear weapons. Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates have all issued statements signaling their potential interest in developing nuclear programs.

In addition to undermining the regional non-proliferation regime, nuclear weapons would provide Iran's government with a shield behind which it could interfere in other Middle Eastern countries with little fear of reprisals.

That prospect forms part of the basis for ongoing U.S. efforts to isolate Iran diplomatically and economically through international sanctions. •NER•

IRANIAN OBSTACLES

IRAN'S ATTEMPTS TO THWART KEY GOALS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

IRANIAN ACTIONS	REGIONAL OBJECTIVES
Providing Hizballah with arms and funds—as much as \$100 million per year—for its terrorist operations in Lebanon and around the world.	Stabilizing Lebanon and Disarming Hizballah
Funneling \$120 million this year to Hamas, the terrorist group that controls the Palestinian government.	Supporting the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process
Facilitating the training of Iraqi Shiite militias attacking members of other sects within the country.	Rebuilding Iraq
Calling for the destruction of Arab states that recognize Israel.	Strengthening Moderate Arab States
Defying the international community by enriching uranium, a key step in assembling atomic arms.	Stopping Nuclear Proliferation