Iranian President Ahmadinejad, Islamic Eschatology, and Near-Term Implications

Chuck Vollmer
President, VII Inc.
26 Jan 06
Executive Summary

- Iran appears to be rushing to a conflict with the West. The main question is what is motivating President Ahmadinejad to such recklessness?
  - **Historical:** Confederacy with Shiite Iraq is a historic opportunity after 1,000 years of domination from Sunni Arabs and Ottoman Turks.
  - **Political:** Ahmadinejad was hired by Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to revive the declining Islamic Revolution. Creating an external enemy would help galvanize his position over the more liberal pro-reform faction.
  - **Economic:** Control of 50% of the world’s oil reserves greatly benefits Iran
  - **Military:** Iran has tens of thousands of special ops forces in Iraq and a million forces on the border. UK and US forces could be significantly outnumbered and overrun with assistance from Syrian and internal insurgent Iraqi forces.
  - **Religious:** Ultra-religious Shia clerics and Ahmadinejad are dedicated to the near-term messianic return of the 12th Imam via the creation of an apocalypse.

- Given these factors, this analysis predicts two possible near-term scenarios:
  - **“Yalu 2” Scenario:** The Korean war changed when China entered across the Yalu River. Operation Iraqi Freedom could dramatically change if Iran enters the fight and internal Iraqi forces turn on their “occupiers”. Schwarzkopf’s 1990 prediction of 20,000 causalities could yet be realized.
  - **“Ezekiel 38” Scenario:** Judeo/Christian/Islamic eschatology predicts an “end times” event where a Persian/Arab/Russian air coalition attacks Israel who responds with nukes. Ahmadinejad is deliberately provoking a fight with Israel.

*An Iranian preemptive attack against Iraq, Israel and/or the West is likely.*
Presentation Outline

- President Ahmadinejad
- Islamic Eschatology
- Near-Term Implications
Threats Of War

Dec 01: President Rafsanjani threatens Israeli extinction

“The use of an atomic bomb against Israel would **totally destroy Israel**, while (an Israeli attack) **would only damage** the Islamic world.”

Dec 02: Iran nuclear facilities unveiled

The United States has evidence that Iran has secretly been building large nuclear facilities -- sites that could possibly be used to make **nuclear weapons**.

Sep 03: Iran unveils Shahab-3 missiles

Iran unveiled for the 1st time to the public the Shahab-3 missiles, capable of reaching Israel. The missiles were daubed with slogans including: “We will crush America under our feet” and “Israel must be wiped off the map”

Aug 05: President Rafsanjani, a moderate, loses overwhelmingly to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a hardliner, in Iran’s presidential elections
President Ahmadinejad’s Biography

- Born in Garmsar, near Tehran, in 1956, the son of a blacksmith
- BS and MS in engineering and PhD in traffic and transport from Tehran's University of Science & Technology
- Member of Revolutionary Guards after the revolution, served in covert operations during the Iran-Iraq war, and earned notoriety as a ruthless interrogator and executioner of political prisoners
- Governor of Iranian province Ardabil
  - “Model Governor” for three consecutive times
- Mayor of Tehran
  - Many consider him one of Tehran’s best mayors
  - Curtailed many reforms put in place by moderate mayors
- Elected President in August 2005 in surprising landslide victory
  - Populist views won support especially from poorer classes
  - Reportedly spent no money on his campaign, but was backed by powerful conservatives who mobilized a network of mosques
  - Had support of and is now organizing the Abadgaran, known as second-generation revolutionaries and young neo-Islamic fundamentalists, who are strong in the Iranian parliament, the Majlis

*Ahmadinejad is known for his integrity, personal piety and Spartan lifestyle.*
17 Sep 05: President Ahmadinejad’s UN Speech Attacks Israel/US And Calls For The 12th Imam To Lead The World To Justice (Through War)

- On Iran: “The Islamic Republic of Iran is a symbol of true democracy”
- On Israel: “State terrorism is supported by those who claim to fight terrorism”
- On the Iraq, Afghanistan: “Today, to establish peace and security in the region, foreign occupation forces must leave and completely hand over the political and economic sovereignty of these two countries to their peoples”

“The ultimate promise of all Divine religions will be fulfilled with the emergence of a perfect human being (12th Imam), who is heir to all prophets. He will lead the world to justice and absolute peace. O mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last repository, the promised one.”

During his U.N. speech, Ahmadinejad stated that the 12th Imam’s aura formed around him, captivating all the world leaders and not allowing them to blink.
Ahmadinejad’s 12th Imam Revelations

- Ahmadinejad is a **devoted religious literalist** or one who believes that the goal of national leaders is to ready the world for the reemergence of divine guidance.

- Ahmadinejad has been very straight-forward in this use of dogma as policy guide, including mentioning the 12th Imam in almost **all of his public speeches**.

- Ahmadinejad’s publicly predicted that the Mahdi will return in **two years**.

- As mayor of Tehran, he had city plans drawn for the return of the 12th Imam.

- During a speech to Iranian leaders, Ahmadinejad said, “Our revolution's **main mission** is to pave the way for the reappearance of the 12th Imam”.

- Aides reported Ahmadinejad ordered his cabinet to write a **pact of loyalty** with the 12th Imam and throw it down a sacred well near the holy city of Qom.

- Ahmadinejad is close to the Hojjatieh Society which is governed by the conviction that the 12th Imam's return will be hastened by **the creation of chaos** on earth.

> “We should define our economic, cultural and political policies based on Imam Mahdi's return,” states Ahmadinejad who has sacked Iran's most experienced foreign diplomats and numerous other public officials.
Ahmadinejad’s Spiritual Guide

- Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, a senior cleric from Qom, is Ahmadinejad's ideological mentor and spiritual guide
- Both believe that the imminent return of the 12th Imam will be ushered in by an apocalyptic conflagration
- Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi:
  - Ultra-conservative Shia cleric
  - Influential in the Iranian Revolution as member of the Hojjatieh society
  - Considered extreme even by the hard-liners of the ruling Guardian Council
  - Instrumental in getting Ahmadinejad elected to president
  - Working to get hard-line conservatives into other positions
  - Advocates total separation from the West
- Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi praises the Islamic values of Ahmadinejad's government and the revival of divine values and beliefs after many years

*Many believe that Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi and his conservative acolytes are the real power in Iran and Ahmadinejad’s tenure is transient.*
Ahmadinejad And Jamkaran Mosque

Devout believers of the 12th Shiite Imam flock to the Jamkaran Mosque to fervently pray for his re-appearance.

Source: AhlulBayt Islamic Mission Channel 4 News

Al-Qaeda seeks to establish a global Islamist caliphate. Ahmadinejad goes further to usher in the ‘second coming’ of the Hidden 12th Imam, the Mahdi.
Ahmadinejad And Unconventional Warfare

- A top Ahmadinejad general, Brigadier Kossari, who heads the Security Bureau of Iran’s Armed Forces, issued a direct threat to the U.S., warning that Iran had identified “all the weak points of our enemies” and has suicide operation volunteers “ready to strike at these sensitive locations”

- A “Lovers of Martyrdom Garrison” is now open in Iran to recruit and train volunteers for “martyrdom-seeking operations” against Western targets.

- Martyrdom-Seeking Divisions are planned for all 30 provinces in the country, organized in brigades, battalions and companies.

- Numerous Iranian unconventional warfare forces are very active in Iraq. A Turkish court reports Iran trained Turkey’s Islamist radicals and supported “terrorist” activities aimed at undermining Turkey's strictly secular order. In neighboring Russia, Iranian terrorists are supporting Chechnya rebels.

- As part of a campaign reportedly led by Ahmadinejad, Iranian state television recently broadcast a professionally-produced animated film for Iranian children glorifying suicide bombers

Ahmadinejad’s administration is taking state-sponsored terrorism to a new level.
Ahmadinejad And Iraq

- Secession of Iraq’s Shia south, with 70% of Iraq’s oil reserves and 60% of the population, would fulfill Ahmadinejad’s dream of a greater Shia Islam.

- Saddam Hussein attacked Iran in 1980 largely because Ayatollah Khomeini disbanded the Iranian armed forces and executed their leaders after the revolution. Iran may be planning to do the same in Iraq whose largely Sunni military was disbanded and continued American presence is increasingly in question.

- Many in the Iraqi law enforcement and military forces owe their allegiance Shia militia groups including Badr Brigade, Mahdi Army and Iraqi Hezbollah, all of which are backed and largely funded by Iran.
  - 12,000 strong Badr Brigade are the main Iraqi Shiite political party’s military.
  - 10,000 man Mahdi Army was created by cleric al-Sadr to fight Americans.
  - Hezbollah is supplying Iraqi insurgents with sophisticated munitions against the U.S.

- Jordanian intelligence estimates an influx of a million Iranians into southern Iraq with 12,000 armed men and intelligence officers. 46 Iranian brigades are poised near the common border to move into Iraq. (Washington Times)

“Waves of a new Islamic Revolution will soon spread to the entire world.” Ahmadinejad
Ahmadinejad And Nuclear Warfare

- Ahmadinejad denies nuclear weapons: “In accordance with our religious principles, pursuit of nuclear weapons is prohibited”. However, Ahmadinejad wants Iran to be a regional power with all the authority that nuclear weapons beget.

- Sep 05, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran.” Ahmadinejad

  - Nov 05: Iran rejects talks with Britain, France, and Germany after Tehran restarted uranium conversion -- a precursor to enrichment.

  - 4 Dec 05, IAEA chairman El Baradei said Iran is a few months away from creating a bomb once they resume uranium enrichment in the next few days.

  - 15 Dec 05: Iran rejected Russia’s offer to enrich uranium for its nuclear program in Russia who has been helping Iran build nuclear power facilities.

- On 20 Dec 05, Israeli Director of Military Intelligence Gen. Zeevi-Farkash said that Iran’s capability to deliver nuclear weapons is two years away. He reported that Iran recently received 12 Russian missiles, with a range of 2000 miles, capable of carrying nuclear warheads to Israel.

Experts agree that Iranian nuclear deployment capability is several years away.
Ahmadinejad On Israel

- According to Al Jazeera, Ahmadinejad believes Israel's “annihilation” is a necessary part of the "historic war" between Islam and the West.

- Ahmadinejad is a major supporter of the Hezbollah and encourages the destruction of Israel over building a Palestinian State.

- At the Tehran al-Quds Day conference, “A World Without Zionism”, caused a worldwide commotion when he openly spoke of the need to “wipe Israel off the map”...

- “…Very soon, this stain of disgrace (Israel) will vanish from the center of the Islamic world – and this is attainable.”

- Ahmadinejad says the Holocaust is a “fabricated myth”, and said if Germany and Austria feel responsible for massacring Jews during WWII, a state of Israel should be established on their soil.

- To hasten the return of the Mahdi, Ahmadinejad may welcome Israeli air strikes to generate adverse world reaction towards Israel and the U.S.

Ahmadinejad is out of touch with most ordinary Iranians who, as Shia Persians, rather than Sunni Arabs, are not fixated on the Palestinian issue.
1414

Ehud Olmert, Acting PM, said that Israel cannot allow a country with hostile intentions to obtain weapons of mass destruction.

Jan 06: Multiple strikes are planned

Ehud Olmert, Acting PM, said that Israel cannot allow a country with hostile intentions to obtain weapons of mass destruction.

Nov 03, Mossad chief addresses Knesset for 1st time in 18 years

The first words to be spoken by an active Mossad spy agency chief, Major General Meir Dagan, at a Knesset meeting in over 18 years, warned that Iran's nuclear program poses the “greatest threat to Israel since the Jewish state's creation in 1948”.

Jan 06: Israel denies it's about to bomb

Israeli military Chief of Staff General Dan Halutz publicly discounted an imminent air strike against Iranian nuclear facilities and Israel is not facing an imminent Iranian threat.

Dec 05, Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud Party leader stated that if Sharon did not act against Iran, “When I form the new Israeli government (after the March 2006 elections) we’ll do what we did in the past against Saddam’s reactor.”
Relations With Other Countries

- **The West**
  - Iran perceives that the U.S. is ready to attack Iran (ala “the axis of evil”)
  - Ahmadinejad is openly hostile to future relations with the U.S. and believes that America’s secular religion of freedom and democracy are exactly opposite Islamic values of justice and theocracy
  - Iran is pulling its foreign currency accounts ($50B) out of European banks to protect Iranian assets from possible U.N. sanctions over its nuclear program

- **Russia**
  - Ahmadinejad is wooing Russia. In Oct 05, he set up a headquarters dedicated to strengthening and aligning strategic interests of Russia and Iran.
  - Russia is helping Iran with nuclear reactors, spy satellites, missile defense
  - It is in Russia’s strategic interest to align itself with Iran

- **China**
  - China is negotiating a $100 billion oil and natural gas contract with Iran
  - China has indicated that it will veto any anti-Iran action in the U.N.

- **Gulf States**
  - Ahmadinejad calls for greater ties with Iran's neighbors
  - The vast majority of Iran's crude oil reserves are located in giant onshore fields in the region near the Iraqi border and the Persian Gulf

*Using Iran’s strategic position to threaten more than half of the world's known oil reserves, Ahmadinejad pits the West against Russia, China and the GCC.*
Ahmadinejad And Syria

- 20 Jan 06: Syrian President Bashar Assad said Syria backs Iran in its confrontation with the West over its nuclear program, and both countries voiced support to Lebanese Hezbollah's resistance to Israeli occupation.

- 20 Jan 06: Ahmadinejad stated that Iranian investment in Syria has risen to $750 million and will go much higher.

- Assad is an Alawi, a religious sect who today claim to be Twelver Shiites (12th Imam).

- Syria supported Iran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War.

- Syrian army has roughly 320,000 active soldiers with reserves in the millions.

*The Syrian military is the essential pillar of the Assad regime.*
Ahmadinejad’s Major Critics

Three leading and veteran Iranian politicians believe that Ahmadinejad and his religious and hard-line supporters will lead Iran into a very dangerous era:

- The former reform-minded president Mohammad Khatami says Ahmadinejad’s government is promoting a Taliban-like fundamentalist movement in Iran which insists on violence and extremism to make its ideology known to the world.

- Former president Hashemi Rafsanjani talks about the dangers that threaten the nation, and implicitly criticizes Ahmadinejad’s aggressive behavior and his unqualified, undeserving and incapable administration.

- Former chief of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Hassan Rouhani believes that resolving Iran’s extremely challenging major international issues will be with Ahmadinejad’s hard-line approach.

Regardless of creating huge anxiety in Iran, leading clerics call Ahmadinejad’s government a blessing from God to put Iran back on its revolutionary course.
The Power Struggle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative Faction</th>
<th>Reformist Faction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Players:</strong> President Ahmadinejad, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi</td>
<td><strong>Key Players:</strong> Presidents Khatami &amp; Rafsanjani, Mr. Rouhani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporters:</strong> Khamenei (initially), top clerics and religious right, military, paramilitary and the underclass</td>
<td><strong>Supporters:</strong> Iranian elite, business leaders, middle class, academics and the youth (i.e., the majority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals:</strong> Revive flagging revolution and regain regional influence through confrontation with the U.S. and developing military might</td>
<td><strong>Goals:</strong> Revive flagging economy through reforms that gains respect of the international community and builds regional influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shared Goals:** (1) Ascendence of Shi`ism after 1,000 years of oppression by Sunni Arabs and Turks, and (2) Iraqi integration is a historical opportunity

The vast majority of Iranians support the reform faction’s agenda and view Ahmadinejad as a mouthpiece for the mullahs.
Presentation Outline

- President Ahmadinejad
- Islamic Eschatology
- Near-Term Implications
What Is Right Or Just Depends On One’s World View: Secular Or Spiritual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secular World View</th>
<th>Spiritual World View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Theocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation of church and state</td>
<td>Religious state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberalism</td>
<td>Puritanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Isolationism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial/Technological</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future innovation</td>
<td>Past inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized change</td>
<td>Institutionalized tradition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Western Emphasis**

**MidEast Emphasis**

“If you are (pious and) Allah-fearing (taqwa), He will bestow on you the gift of discriminating between right and wrong.” Quran, Infaal: 29
**Eschatology**

*Eschatology is a part of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or the ultimate destiny of human kind, commonly phrased as the end of the world or end of the age.*

- Understanding eschatology will provide decision-makers and war-planners with a framework to better understand ultra-religious fundamentalists.

- The three major eschatological religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) have devoted significant scripture about eschatology:
  - Since the Quran accepts many Judeo/Christian scriptures (Torah, Gospels, etc.), it is important to understand Judeo/Christian eschatology as a basis for Islamic eschatology.
  - Except for the theme of monotheism, the Quran speaks more of the coming Qiyamah than of any other topic. The Qiyamah is connected to a time of momentous upheaval, calamity and the end of the world.

- For those seeking a better life in the after-life, eschatology is powerful motivating force (especially to those whose earthly existence is dismal).

*Since eschatology often serves as the basis for religious fundamentalist actions, it is important for decision-makers to understand its tenets.*
### Jewish, Christian And Islamic Religions Have Similar Eschatological Roots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End Times</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd Coming (Of Jesus Christ)</td>
<td>Mahdaviat (12th Imam's 2nd Coming) or Qiyamah (Day of Distress)</td>
<td>Mashiaich (The Anointed One)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Messiah</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
<td>Isa bin Maryam (Jesus Christ)</td>
<td>Future descendant of King David</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awaiting Leader</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mahdi/Mehdi/12th Imam-Shia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End a war that would destroy mankind and establish Jesus' Millennial Kingdom (theocracy)</td>
<td>Imam Mahdi, with Jesus' help, will usher in a new age of peace, and restore a perfect Islamic society (theocracy)</td>
<td>Rebuild the nation of Israel and bring world peace by restoring the Davidic Kingdom (theocracy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Return Location</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>False Messiah</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Christ</td>
<td>al-Dajjal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Islamic eschatology differs from Jewish and Christian beliefs that God gave Israel to the Jews, and that Ishmael was the legal heir to Abraham.*
Many Americans Believe In End-Times

- November 1999 *Newsweek* Poll Highlights:
  - 40% of U.S. adults believe the world will end in a Battle of Armageddon between Jesus and the Antichrist
  - 18% of American adults think Jesus will return to the earth during their lifetimes

- July 2002 *Time/CNN* Poll Highlights:
  - 17% of Americans believe that the end of the world will come in their lifetimes
  - 33% of Americans say they are paying more attention now to how the news might relate to the end of the world
  - 59% say they believe the events in Revelation are going to come true

*If such a high percentage of Americans believe in a pending apocalypse, one can only imagine the power behind a messianic-inclined leader in a religious state.*
Two Christian Eschatological Viewpoints

- A growing number of **fundamentalist Christian groups** believe in a conservative school of thought known as Dispensationalism:
  - Generally, a literal reading of the text
  - Dividing history in epochs
  - Interpretation of dates and symbols
  - Belief in a six-day creation and a 7,000 year history
  - Belief in a “rapture” where believers rise to meet Christ in air and depart earth prior to final establishment of His kingdom on earth known as the seven year Tribulation Period
  - A final battle between good and evil known as Armageddon

- **Mainstream Christian teaching** would affirm the following about eschatology:
  - History is moving to an end point and God will establish His kingdom
  - A central core of Jesus’ mission was to begin the God’s kingdom on earth
  - In the final battle between good and evil, good wins
  - Eternal reward is for those who are true disciples, while eternal punishment is for those who are without Christ

*Like fundamentalists, Muslims tend to accept the Quran as a literal divinely inspired document that cannot be altered, translated or questioned in any way.*
The Tribulation Period (Christian)

Rapture? 1Thess 4:16-17

Anti-Christ Peace With Israel Dan 9

Ascension Of The Satanic Trinity
- The Dragon (Anti-God)
- The Beast (Anti-Christ)
- The False Prophet Dan 9, Rev 12

Image Of The Beast In Temple Dan 9, 2 Thess 2, Rev 11

Armageddon Dan 11, Rev 19

The Trumpets (Rev 8)
- Third Of Earth Burned
- Third Of Sea Destroyed
- Third Of Rivers Poisoned
- Third Of Light Obscured
- Creatures Torture Man
- Third Of Mankind Killed
- Ark Revealed In Heaven

The Bowls (Rev 16)
- Boils, Mark Of Beast
- Everything In Sea Dies
- All Rivers Die
- Intense Heat From Sun
- Darkness Covers Earth
- Armageddon
- Earth Heaves

Rebuilt Russia (North)

China (East)

Libya Ethiopia Egypt (South)

The Bowls (Rev 16)

Jews and Muslims believe in various elements of the Tribulation Period. All three religions warn against time setting as Ahmadinejad has done.

Seals Judgments (Rev 6)
- White Horse (Anti-Christ)
- Red Horse (War)
- Black Horse (Famine)
- Pale Horse (Death)
- Souls Under The Alter
- Earthquake/Sky Changes
- Fire Thrown To Earth

10 Nation Confederacy
- One World Monetary System
- The Mark Of The Beast
- One World Church

Anti-Christ (West)

Messiah 150 Prophecies In New Testament Numerous Prophecies In Quran

Tribulation Period

Armageddon Dan 11, Rev 19

Rapture? 1Thess 4:16-17
“A huge fire will appear from the east which can be seen in the sky a distance of three’s journey away.”

Source: Al Mahdi and the End of Time, Muhammad ibn ‘Izzat Muhammad ‘Arif
Islamic Trials Preceding Mahdaviat
Taken From 50+ Hadith Writings

- Abasement of Arabs & Islam
- Plagues and other afflictions
- Fornication & sex in public
- Comet, celestial signs, eclipse
- Despair & desire for death
- Death of 1/3 of mankind
- Earthquakes (major)
- Elimination of scholars
- European prosperity & rise
- False prophets (sixty liars)
- Fireball in the sky (nuclear?)
- Gulf wars (for black gold)
- Hajj for pleasure
- Hajjis plundered
- Imitation of the West
- Injustice prevalent
- Killer aerial craft & death
- Lack of humility
- Lack of knowledge & prayer
- Lack of trustworthiness
- Slaughter, blood runs in streets
- Profanation of the House of Islam
- Prophet’s mosque desecrated
- Reversion to idolatry
- Skyscrapers & technology
- Spread of usury (banking)
- Time shortening
- Transmogrification (rapture?)
- Trails and tribulations
- War, East vs. West (Armageddon)
- Wealth abundance
- Unrighteous in public office

Many fundamentalist Muslims believe last days are here.
Shi'a Islam or Shi`ism

- Shia and Sunnis agree on core beliefs of Islam: the Quran and the Five Pillars
- Shia split from Sunnis over hereditary succession after the death of the Prophet
- Shia believe the original Imams were divinely inspired and infallible in their judgments, while Sunnis believe that all humans have the same relationship to God
- Shia clerics (imams) hold an elevated spiritual status that is forbidden by Sunnis
- Sunnis reject the doctrine of the “hidden” imam but accept many end-time beliefs
- Shia faith has a deep regard for martyrdom, incorporating many rituals and demonstrations absent from Sunnis
- Shia are more eschatological than Sunnis

Shia’s are the 2\textsuperscript{nd} largest denomination in Islam numbering 120 million or 10%.
Imam al-Mahdi – The Military Leader

- The “Expected” or “ Awaited” leader who will herald the end of time and the Day of Judgment (Qiyamah)
- The Mahdi (Imam) and his followers will essentially be Jesus’ army prior to when he returns
- The Mahdi and Jesus will jointly defeat the Dajjal (anti-Christ), liberate Palestine and unite the world under Islam
- Mahdi community themes:
  - Evil versus good
  - Embattled minority
  - Suffering & martyrdom
  - Preparation for salvation

To serve a greater purpose, devoted messianic-inclined leaders (like Ahmadinejad) could create a cataclysmic situation that would usher in the 12th Imam to save the world from its current destructive course.
Isa bin Maryam (Jesus) – The Messiah

- Jesus is a major prophet in the Quran
  - Arabic name: “Isa bin Maryam” or Hadhrat Isa
  - The Virgin Mary is the only woman mentioned in Quran

- Quran acknowledges Jesus:
  - “Messiah” title (11 times)
  - Divine birth
  - Earthly miracles
  - Prophet of God (but not the Son of God)
  - Raised to heaven (but not crucified)
  - Divine return (second coming)
  - Kills al-Dajjal (anti-Christ)
  - Brings peace to the world
  - Reigns forty years, dies, buried in tomb beside Mohammed

According to the Quran, Jesus is the second most important prophet and will become the Messiah for a 40 years period when no one will fall ill or die.
Sunni & Shia Sources Of The Al-Mahdi

- Sunni and Shia
  - Descendent of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)
  - His first name is Mohammed and has the character of the Prophet
  - He emerges from Mecca and precedes Jesus
  - Wins last battle on earth against the infidels in Palestine
  - He establishes Islam as the world’s religion to bring peace and justice

- Sunni
  - Will be born in Medina, Saudi Arabia
  - Father's name will be Abdullah and his mother's name is Aamina
  - His name is Mohammed
  - He looks like the Prophet
  - He emerges at age forty (like the Prophet)

- Shia
  - Was born in 868 and is still alive
  - Father's name is al-Askari (11th Imam) and his mother is Narjis
  - His name is Mohammad al-Muntazar (12th Imam)
  - He has a broad forehead and prominent nose
  - A loud call from the sky signals the Mahdi's appearance

Of the two branches of Islam, Shia are more oriented to mysticism and eschatology.
Eschatology Of The Shiite's 12th Imam

- Two occultations: first in 9th Century, 2nd prior to the Day of Judgment
- God made the Mahdi a sign to the worlds. He endowed him with wisdom and the distinction of speech as He had endowed John the Baptist.
- Mahdi is the leader with the sword who will fill the world with justice and fairness to end oppression and tyranny and undertake the achievement of truth.
- Mahdi’s reappearance is as the chosen executor of the divine law with the sole purpose of converting all religions of the world into Islam.
- The time will come when al-Mahdi will be ordered by God to appear on the scene of humanity for the performance of the executive task assigned to him:
  - He will then enter the sacred mosque at Mecca and declare his appearance to deliver mankind from the miseries of injustice and the licentious existence.
  - Hours prior to his declaration, there will be a similar declaration from Dajjal, “the deceiver”. Both declarations will be heard throughout the globe at once.
  - The chosen devotees (144,000) of al-Mahdi and others (including some resurrected dead) willing to respond to the sacred call will reach Israel within a very short time.
  - Mahdi will use superhuman spiritual and psychic powers to battle evil.

12th Imam will rally the faithful on earth to oppose the great “deceiver” in Israel.
Presentation Outline

- President Ahmadinejad
- Islamic Eschatology
- Near-Term Implications
The Oil Corridor

- More than 70% of the total world oil supply is in the Oil Corridor (grey shaded area) with 50% controlled by Iran or Iraq (yellow shaded area).
- It is in Russia’s strategic interest to align itself with the interests of the Oil Corridor.
- Iranian hegemony of the Iraqi reserves is an historic opportunity to control the strategic position of the corridor.
- Arab countries of Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain are most at risk.
- Analysts fear that oil prices could surge well beyond $100 a barrel, if the U.N. Security Council imposes trade sanctions on Iran over its nuclear activities.

Iranian control of the corridor would dramatically change the balance of power.
A militarized “Shia Crescent” is forming:
- From Iran through Iraq to Syria, Lebanon and the Hezbollah in Palestine
- From Iran to eastern parts of Saudi Arabia/Yemen

The evolving Shia Crescent is already causing significant instability in the region:
- US and western economic and military strategic interests are regularly being challenged by Iranian leaders
- The invasion of Iraq is underway. The regime has allocated billions of dollars to set up an Iraqi puppet state. Today, Iranian intelligence forces and unconventional warfare forces (Quds) are in Iraq. Several million Islamic Republic of Iran Regular Forces, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Basij (paramilitary) and law enforcement personnel are being mobilized.
- Moderate Gulf countries are feeling more pressure as fundamentalist and right wing Sunni groups are considering their response to increased Shia hegemony
- Israel and Jordan are bracing for increased unconventional warfare

Iranian conventional war in or against Iraq would be tantamount to the second half of the Korean War when the Chinese crossed the Yalu River.
Preemptive (Limited) Strike From The West

- **Israel**: Nov 05, Former Defense Minister Moshe Arens says, “We have the capability of reaching Iran, but the disruption would not be from a single strike.”

- **France**: Jan 06, President Chirac threatened states which support terrorist attacks on France and its strategic interests with retaliatory nuclear strikes.

- **US**: Jan 06, President Bush said that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose “a grave threat to the security of the world” and in particular, Israel.

- **UK**: Jan 06, Prime Minister Blair said “We obviously don't rule out any measures at all”

- A preemptive strike would have to attack multiple locations (see graphic) across Iran to cripple its nuclear production facilities.

*Ahmadinejad seems to be deliberately provoking an attack from the West.*
Arabs And Persians Are Expecting An Attack

Quotes from Bahrain Tribune article:

-“(Israeli) General Dan Halutz said that Israel would not be ‘helpless’ if Iran acquired nuclear weapons”…. “Halutz refused to give details but nevertheless made clear that he had plans up his sleeve.”

-“(Israeli) Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz that Israel said “We are giving priority at this stage to diplomatic action... but in any case we cannot tolerate a nuclear option for Iran and we must prepare ourselves,”….“We must develop the option of our defence with all that implies.”

-“Outgoing head of (Israeli) military intelligence, Aharon Zeevi, said last month that a repeat performance (of the 1981 aerial attack on the Baghdad reactor) was ‘difficult but not impossible’”

Bahraini view is consistent with views throughout the Arab and Persian world.
“Yalu 2” Scenario: Massive Iranian Invasion

- **Yalu**: The Korean War changed when Chinese forces crossed the Yalu River. Operation Iraqi Freedom could dramatically change if Iran enters Iraq with massive conventional forces.

- **Iran**: The attack would be focused on the area occupied by the Shia Iraqis:
  - Thousands of Iranian Quds (special operations and intelligence forces) are reportedly in this area already
  - The main attack would focus on the British sector. 9,000 British troops could be faced with a numerically superior force of up to a half million Iranian and indigenous Iraqi forces, which equates to a 25-50:1 ratio.
  - 150,000 US troops would be engaged by the Iranians, sympathetic Iraqi Shia, and Sunni insurgency forces

- **Syria**: Syria could launch a complementary attack against the US forces (5-10:1 ratio for a combined Iran/Iraq/Syrian offensive)

*British forces would take the brunt of the attack without much support of the larger U.S. force who could be occupied with their own engagement.*
“Ezekiel 38” Scenario Against Israel

- An Ezekiel 38 scenario could be realized by a Iranian/Syrian (Russian supported) rocket/missile (Katyusha, Scud, Shehab 3) blitzkrieg-like attack
- Since nuclear warfare may not be available to Iran for years, Iran could preemptively attack Israel conventionally with support of the Russians, Syrians and other regional powers as depicted in Ezekiel’s prophecies
- Secular world view:
  - An Iranian/Russian coalition victory would destabilize the MidEast and shift control of half of the world’s oil to a new regional power
  - An Israeli victory would likely involve use of nuclear weapons (Arrow, ICBM) and would traumatize the world on multiple levels
- Spiritual world view:
  - An Israeli victory would be interpreted in eschatological terms by fundamentalist Jews, Christians and Muslims alike
    - Orthodox Jews would increase their pursuit of an ideal Jewish state, Zion
    - Evangelical Christians would increase missionary and revival activities
    - Muslims would become more radicalized and prepare for the Qiyamah
  - Secular backlash against fundamentalists is likely to be significant including widespread persecution as predicted by scripture

An Ezekiel 38 scenario would be perceived by the Shia as a major sign of the Mahdaviat (2nd Coming of the 12th Imam).
Conclusions

- **Spiritual**
  - If the US-Iran conflict is cast in Mahdaviat terms, détente will be difficult
  - Ahmadinejad’s views on the Mahdi is viewed by vast majority of Muslims as incredulous. However, provoking or initiating a war would help him and his mullahs present an outside threat to the general populace.
  - **Near term outlook:** Ahmadinejad’s fanatic religious views will work against him and Khamenei will replace him with a less extremist person

- **Secular**
  - For the Iranian regime, Iraq is the gateway to a global Islamic world
  - Probability for conflict:
    - Unconventional: **UNDERWAY** – Iranian special ops forces are in Iraq and the likelihood is that these operations will increase.
    - Conventional: **HIGH** – Iran is preparing its conventional forces that could be used in Iraq. An Israeli or U.S. conventional strike is possible if Iranian nuclear development persists.
    - Nuclear: **RELATIVELY LOW** – Iran does not have nuclear weapons and Israel will not preempt with nuclear weapons.
  - **Near term outlook:** Lots of hostile anti-American rhetoric while the ultra-conservative regime tries to solidify their grip inside Iran and attempts to destabilize Iraq without incurring intervention of the United Nations

*The major near-term concern for the U.S. is what Iran will do next in Iraq.*
Recommendations

- **Strategic:** Decision-makers, at multiple levels in government, need to better incorporate religious, cultural and social factors into their analyses and strategic planning
  
  - Today’s intelligence relies too much on empirical and objective factors based mainly on military, political and economic factors
  
  - Religious analyses are more abstract and subjective, but equally important – more important regarding messianic-inclined leaders
  
  - The study of Islamic eschatology will give Western planners a better view of the fundamentalist’s “strategic vision” and “end game”

- **Tactical:** Armed forces should dedicate significant assessment and planning resources to assist warfighters regarding the prospect of Iran engaging in a conventional war in Iraq

“*If Iran wanted, it could make Iraq hell for the United States.*” Iraq’s Deputy Foreign Minister Hamid Al Bayati

“There is no doubt that the Iranians are heading for the edge; when one walks on the edge, it is easy to stumble.” Gen Dan Haloutz, Israeli Chief of Staff
Point Of Contact

Mr. C. D. “Chuck” Vollmer
President, VII Inc.

1645 White Pine Drive
Vienna, Virginia USA

Tele: (703) 319-2090
Fax: (703) 319-2091

Email: cvollmer@viiinc.com
www.viiinc.com