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Column One: The new Zionist occupiers

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The diplomatic campaign against Iran has failed. After three years of sterile diplomacy, last Saturday the UN Security Council passed impotent sanctions against Iran. Iran greeted the sanctions by announcing its intention to expand its uranium enrichment activities by running an additional 3,000 centrifuges at its nuclear installation in Natanz.

Iran's contemptuous response to the sanctions indicates that they have come too late. The Security Council resolution is aimed at encumbering foreign assistance to Iran's nuclear program. But the Iranians no longer need much outside help to develop atomic bombs.

Due to this Iranian invulnerability, many in Israel and the US argue that additional sanctions, undertaken outside the UN that would target Iran's economy, must be adopted. Israeli diplomats and Bush administration officials have reportedly descended on Europe in the hopes of convincing the Europeans to support NATO sanctions that would isolate Iran economically.

Yet here too, such sanctions would probably come too late to make a difference. As a report recently released by the Institute for Analysis of Global Security in Washington demonstrates, Iran is working steadily to minimize its economic susceptibility to sanctions. To this end it is working to overcome its two principal economic vulnerabilities: its dependence on imported refined oil, and its antiquated oil and gas infrastructures.

Last year Iran signed a \$70 billion deal with the Chinese to modernize its oil and gas fields. Iran also signed an oil deal with Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez that guarantees its fuel imports will be sanctions-proof.

To make itself immune from the effects of economic sanctions or a possible naval blockade, Iran is building two new oil refineries. It is also moving its transportation sector from oil to natural gas. With the second largest natural gas reserves in the world, an Iranian transportation system which runs on natural gas will be immune to foreign sanctions. Furthermore, by modifying its gas stations and private cars to run on natural gas, Iran is freeing up its oil refineries to produce jet fuel for its air force.

Through these massive economic projects, Iran shows clearly that it is placing its economy on long-term war-footing. It will do whatever it takes to ensure it is

equipped to acquire nuclear weapons and maintain its control over the global jihad.

This all-out Iranian commitment to jihad is disconcerting to its Sunni neighbors. Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah recently worried aloud about the burgeoning Shiite threat. So too, Jordan's King Abdullah has warned repeatedly of the rising Shiite Crescent extending from Lebanon to Iran.

Influenced by these Arab voices, many Israeli policymakers have raised the possibility of forming a coalition with these Arab nations to block Iran's nuclear ambitions. To advance such a notion, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has given Fatah commander and PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas \$100 million, has armed Abbas's terror squads with thousands of rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition, and is planning to release terrorists from Israeli prisons.

So too, some American officials who hear these statements believe that the key for securing Arab support for action against Iran is renewed US pressure on Israel to give its land to the Palestinians and the Syrians; and a redeployment of US and Coalition forces outside of the major cities of Iraq.

Tempting as it is to believe that Riyadh and Cairo would help us to fight our common foe in Iran, there is absolutely no chance that they will. In any Islamic contest against Israel or the US, the Arabs will support the jihadists. This is so because Arab despots who have promoted jihadist ideals among their subjects, must support jihad against non-Muslims throughout the world to prevent their people from implementing their ideals at home. The support for jihad is what brings together Arab nations of all stripes and colors with their Persian neighbors.

This Arab-Islamic union was given ideological heft last week at a two-day conference in Doha, Qatar. "The Sixth Pan-Arab and Islamic Conference" brought together some 270 leading pan-Arab and jihadist leaders from throughout the world. The jihadists, led by Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, included Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, Hizbullah leader Hassan Hadroug and the Iraqi Sunni jihadist ideologue Sheikh Hathir al-Dari. Among the pan-Arabists was Khair al-Din Haseeb, who the US Army refers to as the "father of pan-Arab nationalism." Iranian and Iraqi Shiite ayatollahs also reportedly attended.

Qaradawi announced that the goal of the conference was to merge the pan-Arab and Islamic wars against the US and Israel specifically and against the infidels generally. In his words, "All Arabs, Kurds, Sunni, Shia, right-wingers, left-wingers should be united in the full-scale battle with the enemies. They are launching a political, economic, social and civilizational, and cultural battle against us and we should unify our efforts to stand up to it."

The participants all echoed Qaradawi's call for Fatah and Hamas to formally merge and so reflect the wider trend of consolidation in the cause of jihad that is occurring throughout the Arab world. As Qaradawi put it, "Pan-Arabism and Islam are very closely linked. There is no contradiction between them. Whoever is seeking to separate Pan-Arabism from Islam is trying to separate the soul from the body."

That the pan-Arabists and Islamists are military allies in the global jihad was made clear this week in the Horn of Africa as Sunday Ethiopia invaded Somalia. Last June an al-Qaida aligned jihadist movement called the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took control of Mogadishu and so consolidated its control over most of Somalia. The ICU moved swiftly to institute Sharia law, and so transformed Somalia into a Taliban-like state.

The legitimate Somali government, the Transitional Federal Government - a secular regime run by various warlords and tribal chiefs - was isolated in the provincial capital of Baidoa. The ICU is strongly supported by Eritrea. And although it fights neither Americans nor Jews, it is also sponsored by Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen and Libya.

In November, the ICU declared jihad against Ethiopia and announced its intention to conquer large chunks of Ethiopian and Kenyan territory. According to the US, the ICU was also planning to assassinate Ethiopian and Kenyan political leaders, and carry out terror attacks in Ethiopia. Surrounded by Sudan and Eritrea to its west and north and the ICU to its east, the government in Addis Ababa decided to help the TFG overthrow the ICU and reinstate its authority. In just four days, it succeeded, as Thursday morning TFG and Ethiopian forces took control of Mogadishu, while ICU forces were on the run.

Unfortunately, in today's world, apparently nothing breeds condemnation and hatred more than military victories against jihadists.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference has called daily for an Ethiopian pullout from Somalia. So too, the Arab League demands that Ethiopia retreat. With their people on the ground retreating with the ICU, as has been their consistent policy towards Israel, so in Somalia the Arabs and Muslims wish to win at the negotiating table what they cannot achieve on the battlefield.

In this pursuit, they enjoy support from a familiar quarter. Five days before Ethiopia invaded Somalia, the EU attempted to mediate the conflict in a manner that would prolong and legitimize the ICU's control of Somalia.

On December 20, EU mediator Louis Michel shuttled between Baidoa and Mogadishu. Later that day he triumphantly announced, "There is a strong, good will by both parties to resolve this conflict with political dialogue."

When word of the Ethiopian invasion got out, Michel - like his associates in the EU Secretariat - moved immediately to condemn Ethiopia. Sunday he said, "I condemn in the strongest terms the escalation of the conflict in Somalia into an all-out war and appeal for all Somali sides to cease immediately all hostilities. I express my deepest concern on the reported involvement of foreign forces in Somalia and urge all external players to refrain immediately from intervening militarily in Somali affairs and provoke further violence."

Last week, as he engaged in his shuttle diplomacy, Michel pointedly did not take a public stand regarding the ICU's declaration of jihad against Ethiopia or its announcement that it would target any UN-peacekeepers that entered the country.

Israelis routinely assume that Europe's pro-jihadist policy towards the Palestinians is a result of anti-Semitism or anger over Israel's military victory in 1967. But the EU's treatment of Ethiopia and the TFG indicates that Brussels' hostility towards the Jewish state is part of a much further-reaching policy. Europe's pro-jihad position toward the war in Somalia indicates that its support for jihad is over-arching rather than limited to specific battlegrounds.

So what we learn from the Qatar conference and the war in Somalia is that a tripartite alliance of Iran, the Arab world and Europe upholds the cause of jihad not merely against Israel and the US, but globally. It is clear that the Iranians are the most dangerous part of the three-headed jihadist Hydra. Like the Arab despots, the Europeans are provoked by cynicism. While the Arab dictatorships embrace jihad to safeguard their regimes, the Europeans support the jihadists in the hope that their support will deflect jihadist violence away from them.

For their part, the Iranians truly believe in the ideals of jihad which is why Europe and the Arabs oppose them. The Iranian regime wants to see jihad everywhere and so it supports the overthrow of the regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Belgium no less than it supports jihad in Israel, Iraq and Somalia.

All this is important for Israel to understand today as it weighs its options towards Iran and the Palestinians. The events in Somalia and Qatar demonstrate that Israel cannot influence the Palestinians' behavior one way or another because the Palestinians do not stand on their own. They are part of a wider pan-Arab and pan-Islamic trend.

In their jihad against Israel, the Palestinians will receive automatic support not only from Iran, but from the Arab world and Europe as well. So too, the war in Somalia and the conference in Qatar show that supporting the Palestinians is but one aspect of Arab and European global support for jihad. Just as the US was the only country not to call for an Ethiopian retreat this week, so Israel cannot expect to expand its support base beyond Washington.

Ethiopia's flag once portrayed the Lion of Judah. This is notable for today Ethiopia is becoming the new Zion. If Israel wishes to persevere in the jihad raging against it, it must take close note of what is happening to Ethiopia today.

It is true that Iran threatens the Arabs and Europe. Sadly, as their joint support for the jihad in Somalia indicates, none of them will help us contend with Teheran.