

Prepare war!

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THE WORDS of God through Joel, in the third chapter of his prophecy, refer to a time when God “shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem” (v. 1), and consequently they are again in their land. The presence of Israel in their land will provide the focus of Divine judgement on the nations, for God says, “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel” (v. 2).

In preparation for this situation the prophet records this call: “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about . . .” (vv. 9-11). When we look at the world of our day we see both Israel regathered and dramatic investment in arms, especially, but not exclusively, in the Middle East.

Weapons in the Gulf States

A recent report produced by Geo Strategy Direct¹ states: “The Persian Gulf states, spurred by the growing threat from Iran, are expected to increasingly dominate the global defence market. A report by Forecast International asserted that the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states would account for sixty per cent of defence spending in the Middle East. Forecast said the GCC would invest more than \$63 billion for the militaries, with Saudi Arabia representing two-thirds of funding”. It was further predicted that the expenditure would “grow by more than eleven per cent, reaching nearly \$120 billion by 2014”. The analyst compiling the report observed that this investment in military equipment “is disproportionate to the relatively small size of their militaries”, thus confirming Joel’s call, “let the weak say, I am strong”.

The incentive for this immense investment in armaments is the perceived threat from Iran. Iran, who has ties with Russia, is listed among the supporters of Gog in Ezekiel 38. It is perhaps, then,

no surprise that the suppliers of armaments to the Gulf states are those traditionally associated with the “king of the south”: “The report said Britain, France and the United States would continue to serve as the leading suppliers to the GCC”.

Israel’s new drone

The threat from Iran also affects Israel. The publicly expressed view of their president that Israel, as a Zionist state, should be removed, and their continuing development of nuclear capability, are seen as a substantial threat in Israel. Consequently Israel continues to equip its army and develop military equipment to enable it to counter an attack by missiles with nuclear warheads. A recent development is reported by The Associated Press: “Israel’s air force . . . [has] . . . introduced a fleet of huge pilotless planes that can remain in the air for a full day and could fly as far as the Persian Gulf, putting rival Iran within its range. The Heron TP drones have a wingspan of 86 feet (26 metres), making them the size of Boeing 737 passenger jets and the largest unmanned aircraft in Israel’s military”. They have not specified their uses, but claim that “the huge new drone will give an added element to Israel’s ability to control its borders”.²

Russia upgrades its navy

Preparation for war is not confined to the Middle East. We have already noted in Watchman³ the plan by France to sell a Mistral-class assault ship to Russia. This has recently been approved by French President Nicholas Sarkozy. This has caused alarm, particularly in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as among some NATO members. Ariel Cohen, reporting in the *Wall Street Journal*,⁴ comments: “Turning away from the Soviet-era autarchy, Moscow is planning to buy sophisticated armaments from abroad—Mistrals from France or,

1. Geo Strategy Direct, 24 Feb. 2010, reported in *Milestones Snippets*; subscribe free by sending an email to snippets@milestones.org.
2. Associated Press, 22 Feb. 2010.
3. *Testimony*, Jan. 2010, p. 431.
4. *Wall Street Journal*: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703382904575058943786666482.html>.



French Mistral assault ship

Picture: Wikimedia Commons/Rama

as recently reported, advanced unmanned aerial vehicles from Israel. The plan is to then either reverse-engineer the new weapons or produce them under license to force-march its obsolescent military to the 21st century. Russia's naval modernisation should particularly worry NATO. Since the 18th century, Russia has traditionally

built up its smaller sea fleets in the Baltic and the Black Sea before 'upgrading' to a blue-water navy. Building a modern navy will intimidate Russia's neighbours and open doors for Russian power projection in the Mediterranean and the Middle East".

God in control

Such preparation for war consumes vast sums of money and resources that could be put to better use. Those involved, including Israel, act in ignorance of God's declared purpose to judge the nations and to save an ultimately repentant Israel. We look for the day He has promised when "He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Mic. 4:3).