

This Week's Developments

December 19 - 31, 2021

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Russia, China and Iran: Triple Trouble in 2022

The Times - Comment, December 27, 2021



EVENT

There are some perilous years when governments are thrown into confusion by simultaneous and cascading events. **Next year three simmering crises in Asia, Europe and the Middle East may come to a boil.** China's mounting threats to Taiwan, the Russian troop build-up around Ukraine and the accelerating pace of the Iranian nuclear programme may, without some extraordinary statecraft, **all come to a head and turn to war.** Two full-scale invasions, across the Russian-Ukrainian border and across the Taiwan straits, would stretch the western alliance system to breaking point. The entanglement of Russia and China with the survival of the Iranian regime creates a toxic brew. The withdrawal from Afghanistan has weakened the US. That is why **2022 has all the hallmarks of being a dangerous year.**

COMMENT

The world is on the very brink of conflict. As this editorial says in the Times newspaper, **2022 could see 3 major war's erupt around the world.** And all 3 are connected. Russia, China and Iran all sense weakness in the West and know that if they act together they could destabilise the West further and increase their own power. The only threat the West has against Russia is more sanctions. But the advantages for Putin of military aggression are now greater than the costs. Russia is already threatening to stop pricing its oil exports in dollars which would hurt the US. For these reasons war in Ukraine is now "an odds on bet" according to military analysts. **China and Iran could both use the focus on Ukraine to cause their own mayhem.** 2022 could see key prophecies fulfilled. We could see Russia finally take the final piece of Magog (eastern Ukraine). We could also see Iran launch attacks on Israel through its proxy armies (Hamas / Hezbollah).

BIBLE QUOTE

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. **The night is far spent, the day is at hand:** let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

(Romans 13:11-12)

Russian mercenaries deploy to eastern Ukraine

- sources

Reuters, December 23, 2021



Russian mercenaries have deployed to separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine in recent weeks to bolster defences against Ukrainian government forces as tensions between Moscow and the West rise, four sources have told Reuters. In recent weeks, Russia has moved tens of thousands of regular troops to staging posts closer to Ukraine and followed up by demanding urgent security guarantees from the West designed, Moscow says, to prevent Ukraine and other neighbouring countries being used as a base to attack it. Of four sources, three described their offers from mercenary recruiters to go to Donbass. They said the recruiters did not disclose who they represented. All four sources declined to be named, citing fears for their safety. Two of the three sources said they had accepted; the third said he had refused. "There is a full house. They are gathering everybody with combat experience," said one of the two who accepted.

COMMENT

When Russia took Crimea **it used its own soldiers in disguise as mercenaries** – so they were not uniformed Russian soldiers and therefore made it even harder to pin the blame on Putin. In other words **Putin used deception to win Crimea**. No one was fooled by Putin's guile but it worked. It seems likely then that Putin will try a similar tactic with eastern Ukraine. A mercenary, sometimes known as a soldier of fortune, is a private individual, particularly a soldier, who **takes part in military conflict for personal profit, is otherwise an outsider to the conflict, and is not a member of any other official military**. But Putin's mercenaries are in reality his own soldiers in disguise. The Bible says that Putin (Gog) would indeed be a master of deception and succeed in all he does. We can expect more deception – more promises of peace – but all the time, planning for war.

BIBLE QUOTE

He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

(Daniel 8:25 NIV)

UK warns Russia against 'strategic mistake'

Reuters, December 23, 2021



EVENT

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss on Thursday repeated her warning to Russia that **any incursion into Ukraine would be a costly mistake**, but welcomed Moscow's willingness to enter talks. "Any Russian incursion would be a massive strategic mistake and would be met with strength, including coordinated sanctions with our allies to **impose a severe cost on Russia's interests and economy**," she said in a statement. "The only way out of the current situation for Russia is through dialogue and I welcome the fact that Russia has signalled it is willing to enter talks in January." The Kremlin denies it plans to invade and says the West is gripped by Russophobia. Moscow says the expansion of NATO threatens Russia and has contravened assurances given to it as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

COMMENT

Britain and America are both trying to deter Putin from invading Ukraine **by promising harsh sanctions if he decides to**. On Thursday this week there was yet another phone call between Biden and Putin. Biden told reporters, "I made clear to President Putin that if he makes any more moves, if he goes into Ukraine, we will have severe sanctions. **We will increase our presence in Europe, with our NATO allies, and there will be a heavy price to pay for it.**" Biden is speaking to the Ukrainian president today where he will reaffirm his support for Ukraine. The Bible says that "at the time of the end" the king of the south (US/UK) will "push" (militarily provoke) the king of Daniel 11:36-39. That king is Gog himself. Following the provocation the entire Russian army (king of the north) descends into Israel. We could be extremely close to the push occurring....

BIBLE QUOTE

He [Gog] will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price." At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him [the king of the south] with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. *(Daniel 11:39-40 NIV)*

Putin plots course for yet another term in office

The Times, December 30, 2021



EVENT

He has been a fixture of political life in Russia for so long that it is sometimes easy to forget just how far back his rule stretches. He has outlasted four US presidents and four British prime ministers. When Mark Zuckerberg was still a Harvard student, Putin had already tamed Russian national television, bringing it under the Kremlin's absolute control. When Boris Johnson was still the editor of the Spectator magazine, Putin was rolling back democratic reforms by scrapping direct elections for regional governors. He will celebrate the 22nd anniversary of his ascent to power on New Year's Eve. He was due to stand down in 2024 at the end of his present tenure but constitutional amendments that were introduced last year extended the limits of his terms, giving him the right to remain in office until 2036, by which time he will be 83. If he does indeed stay in power until then, he will have ruled Russia for longer than anyone since Peter the Great, who managed almost 43 years before his death in 1725. He is already Russia's longest-serving leader since Stalin, whose tyrannical rule lasted for 30 years.

COMMENT

On the last day of the last millennium Boris Yeltsin made a surprise national TV announcement that he was stepping down with immediate effect as Russia's president. No one saw this coming. Although the Yeltsin years were chaotic (he was often seen drunk in public) it was a total bombshell as he announced his resignation. The greater bombshell however, was that Yeltsin named his successor who took over with straight away as the unknown KBG agent – Vladimir Putin. He had no political background and was little known even in Russia. That was 22 years ago – and Putin is still in power. He has changed Russia's constitution twice to enable him to stay in power to 2036! Putin is Gog – the ruler of Magog (southern Russia and east Ukraine.) (*This is Jewish year 5782*)

BIBLE QUOTE

a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. [Putin was handed power - he was a nobody before but was handed the presidency] He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. (*Daniel 8:23-24 NIV*)

Iran shows off rocket launch to raise pressure in nuclear deal talks

The Times, December 31, 2021



EVENT

Iran's reinvigorated space programme showed off a new rocket launch yesterday, sending a message to western powers in negotiations with Tehran over the future of its nuclear programme. State television showed what it said was the successful launch of a Simorgh (which translates as Phoenix) rocket, carrying three satellites. It took off from the Imam Khomeini Spaceport, where preparations for a launch had been observed by western powers' own satellites in mid-December. The success was limited — the launch may have failed to reach sufficient speed to release the three satellites into orbit, but the rocket itself attained a height of 290 miles (470 kilometres). Western powers have been monitoring the Iranian space programme closely, saying it is “dual use” — that as well as being intended as part of genuine attempt to launch satellites, it is also ballistic missile technology.

COMMENT

Since President Raisi {an ultra hardline Iranian} was elected in June, Iran has pursued a strategy of ramping up its demands at the talks while at the same time pursuing an aggressive expansion of its nuclear programme. These rockets fired into space with satellites are more about testing their missile abilities and showcasing them to the world. If you can fire a rocket into space successfully you can fire a missile at another country. The nuclear talks are still in deadlock and something at some point will have to give. The Bible says that the Medes (Iranians) will be stirred up at the time of the end. It also says they have a fascination with missiles and rockets. We are told they care nothing for silver and gold - they are driven by an ideology. Their missiles are used and bring destruction. Iran is the power behind the initial inner ring war around Israel.

BIBLE QUOTE

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

(Isiah 13:17-18)

Roman-era 'Good Shepherd' ring found off Israel in ancient shipwreck

BBC, December 26, 2021



EVENT A Roman-era gold ring bearing an image used by early Christians to symbolise Jesus has been found by archaeologists off Israel's Mediterranean coast. The Israel Antiquities Authority said the ring was set with a green gemstone carved with the figure of a shepherd boy carrying a sheep on his shoulders. In the Bible, Jesus describes himself as the "Good Shepherd". The ring was among a number of artefacts discovered in two shipwrecks near the ancient port of Caesarea. "The ships were probably anchored nearby and were wrecked by a storm," said Jacob Sharvit of the IAA's Marine Archaeology Unit. Caesarea was home to one of the first Christian communities and, according to the New Testament, was where the apostle Peter baptised the Roman centurion Cornelius. "This was the first instance of a non-Jew being accepted into the Christian community," Mr Sharvit said. "From here, the Christian religion began to be disseminated across the world."

COMMENT Archaeology can shore up our faith. Items are being discovered all the time that always back up the veracity of the scriptures. It is interesting that some early Christians wore a ring with the picture of a shepherd boy carrying a sheep. Interesting too that this was found on a shipwreck at Caesarea. The gospel to the Gentiles began at this very place. And from there it spread west predominantly until "isles afar off" heard the Word of the Lord. And now the gospel has been preached in all the world. It could be that 2022 sees the return of the "good shepherd". His flock will all be gathered to him. Let us continue to listen to his voice by reading the Word and being ready for when he appears...

BIBLE QUOTE And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, (1 Peter 5:4+Hebrews 13:20-21)

ADDITIONAL AND SUPPORTING ARTICLES

DebkaFile Review (world events through the bi-focals of Israeli military intelligence) **TV-7 Israel News** **Watchman Newscast**

2021-12-31 [The Great Fall Of China](#) - WION - 25.41 min - YouTube

2021-12-31 [Trends that will rule 2022](#) - Gravitas - 11.14 min - YouTube

2021-12-30 [President Vladimir Putin- Nord Stream 2 undersea gas pipeline is ready to calm gas prices](#) - Wion - 2.13 min - YouTube

2021-12-30 [Iran Boasts of Rocket Launch Into Space; China & Russia 2022 Invasion Plans](#) - Watchman - 9.47 min - YouTube

2021-12-28 [Israel Airstrikes on Syrian Port Cause -Massive Damage-; Iran Munitions Targeted](#) - Watchman -11.19 min - YouTube

2021 12-28 [Why is Israel striking Syrian facilities](#) - Gravitas- 4.57 min - YouTube

2021-12-18 Tensions rise between Russia and Ukraine – SkyNews - 2.39 min - YouTube

2021-12-18 Israel is Prepared to Confront Iran With or Without the US – CBN - 3.38 min - YouTube

2021-12-16 U.S. Shoots Down Iran-Linked Drone Over Syria; Delays Crucial Israel Shipment - 9.22 min – Watchman - YouTube

2021-12-11 What can the West do if Russia attacks Ukraine - DW News - 10.0 min - YouTube

2021-12-09 Can Iran really make a nuclear bomb - Gravitas - 4 min - YouTube

2021-12-08 Olaf Schultz – 4.05 min - YouTube

2021-12-08 Biden threatens Putin with severe economic sanctions over Ukraine - DW News - 6.0 min - YouTube

2021-12-07 Will Russia invade Ukraine in January 2022 - Gravitas - 6.0 min - YouTube

2021-12-07 Israel Launches Airstrikes on Iran Proxies in Syria; Blocks Hamas Terror Tunnels – Watchman - 11.29 min - YouTube

Russia accuses Nato countries of "pumping" Ukraine with weapons. Accusing the US of stoking tensions, Mr Putin said Russia had "nowhere further to retreat to - do they think we'll just sit idly by?"

Russia's counter-claim could become a justification for military action.

Vladimir Dzhubarov, number two on Russia's Federation Council's international affairs committee,

said in early December some 500,000 Ukrainians in the rebel-held areas now had Russian passports. If rebel leaders appealed for Russian help, "of course, we cannot abandon our compatriots", he said.



*Russia annexed Crimea in 2014

What does Russia want?

President Putin has warned the West not to cross Russia's "red lines" on Ukraine. So what are those red lines?

One of them is stopping Nato's expansion any further to the east, which includes Ukraine and Georgia.

Russia also wants Nato to abandon military activity in Eastern Europe, which would mean pulling out its combat units from Poland and the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and not deploying missiles in countries such as Poland and Romania.

In short it wants Nato to return to its pre-1997 borders. Mr Putin says Russia is aiming to avoid bloodshed and find a diplomatic way out, but that kind of demand is bound to fall flat. Nevertheless, that is what he wants any talks with the US to focus on and he says the ball is in the West's court.

Nato members in Europe



- ① Estonia
- ③ Lithuania
- ⑤ Slovakia
- ⑦ Romania
- ② Latvia
- ④ Poland
- ⑥ Hungary

*Russia annexed Crimea in 2014