

The Spiritual Force Behind the Iraq War

While politicians argue about American policy in Iraq, author and evangelist Mike Evans is calling leaders to recognize the most serious threat to peace: radical Islam in Iran.

Mike Evans has traveled to the Middle East nearly 70 times, most recently this spring. His meetings with top-level government officials and others in the region have convinced him that 2007 is a pivotal year in the Iraq war.

Unless the U.S. is determined to continue fighting this battle, he foresees the same terror eventually striking America that is a fact of daily life in Israel: suicide bombers hitting shopping centers, churches and other targets with backpack-like devices packed with dynamite and 40 pounds of nails.

Not because Evans admires doomsday scenarios. The Middle East analyst who has written three New York Times best-sellers on the region since 2003 says the oft-ignored reality of the war is what it represents: a test of wills between the United States and Iran.

The latter is dispatching a legion of suicide bombers to Iraq, with the intention of moving on to Lebanon and destabilizing the entire region, Evans says. He reached that conclusion after visiting Kurdistan, where a 400-mile section of Iraq's border is open to Iranians pouring through with drugs, cash and offers of employment.

Evans believes if our nation falters in Iraq, Islamic

extremists will seize on this apparent sign of weakness to take their next step onto U.S. streets. That could come via people already trained and living here, a threat that will only be dimmed by a show of force, the author says.

“We did not understand what the real intentions are of the jihadists,” Evans says, referring to the September 11, 2001, attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center, seriously damaged the Pentagon and downed a plane in rural Pennsylvania.

“I became more convinced as I began writing this book that still today the U.S. doesn’t understand. The Islamic revolution, fueled and fired by the Shiite movement out of Iran, is committed to a holy war against the West.”

This message isn’t restricted to *The Final Move Beyond Iraq* (FrontLine), which released in mid-May. Evans simultaneously premiered a nationwide, syndicated television documentary of the same name (for updated listings visit Evan’s Web site,).

It includes observations from such experts as James Woolsey, CIA director from 1993-1995 under President Bill Clinton; former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; former Army General and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Hugh Shelton; and noted Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz.

The book includes interviews with each man, and others, in the appendix. One telling remark comes from Woolsey, who observes that U.S. residents have a hard time sorting out the radical fanaticism of such figures as Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

To many Americans, saying that certain Muslims are crazed fanatics while others, such as Sufi Muslims, are reasonable and easy to work with sounds like a discussion of the differences between Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Woolsey says. But the threat of radical Islam is grave.

“If Torquemada—who killed about 300,000 people by burning them at the stake and stealing their money ... in the Spanish Inquisition—were around today in some country, would you say, ‘Well, he’s a representative of Christ on Earth and there’s no way we can challenge that, I guess’?” Woolsey asks. “No. You take the guy out. We cannot let these fanatics drive the future of the Middle East, much less the world.”

Recognizing the Danger

This is the point to the war in Iraq, Evans says: not to bolster an “us vs. them” mentality, but to defeat radicals on Middle Eastern soil. Evans notes that more than 90 percent of Islamic adherents are not violent. However, with 1.3 billion Muslims in the world, that leaves nearly 130 million jihadists dedicated to destroying Western civilization.

Even if the number is exaggerated and only 1 percent, or 13 million Muslims, are jihadists, Evans says, that is still a serious problem. Because the U.S. was shaken to its roots by just 19 terrorists in 2001, he says we must awaken to this situation’s deadly nature—and recognize that negotiating with terrorists is the same folly as nations trying to appease Adolph Hitler in the 1930s.

Both evangelist and journalist, Evans approaches the task of reporting and analyzing Mideast events with the same kind of

fervor that led thousands to Christ at his rallies in the past. Evans traces the origin of the Islamic revolution to the 1970s, when radicals overthrew the Shah of Iran and installed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as the head of a theocracy dedicated to one day ruling the world.

“This Islamic revolution is what’s driving me and deeply concerning me,” says Evans, whose 2006 book, *Showdown With Nuclear Iran* (Thomas Nelson), detailed Iran’s determination to acquire nuclear weapons to achieve its goal of destroying Israel and the United States.

“I’m trying to blow the trumpet so that the church wakes up and unites together. They did it with Rick Warren’s *Purpose-Driven Life* book. They did it with Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* movie. We know that the church has the power to unite and hear the message of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer—a message of moral clarity.”

Such clarity includes acknowledging the existence of evil. The failure to do so is one reason Evans believes so few recognize World War III is under way. In addition, Evans says too many Christians take the position that the church has nothing to say regarding foreign policy or terrorism—the kind of message that fueled a 1930s movement to deny Jews entrance to the U.S. despite the obvious Nazi threat.

Although he doesn’t believe the current situation signals the end, Evans calls it “winds of Armageddon” and says it represents the same principalities and spiritual wickedness that Daniel once faced.

“He defeated them through the power of prayer,” Evans says.

“Out of this glorious defeat, he found the prophecies of Jeremiah to be real in his life and so did Esther. ... Esther saved a race. Daniel saved a race. They understood the power of an appeal and the power of prayer.

“This is the same crisis that we’re facing right now. The blood of humanity is crying out from the ground. God’s people can change the destiny of the world if they will engage themselves in prayer and moral clarity.”

The Key to Victory

Evans says that not only do millions of Americans not grasp this holy war, but also most news reports have omitted a crucial truth about Iraq: the success of democracy in Kurdistan. Since the fall of 2005, no terrorist attacks have occurred in the mountainous region of northern Iraq; no American soldiers have died there.

The Kurds trace their genealogy back to the ancient Medes and King Darius. They were among the Magi who presented gifts to Christ, and Medes were present on the day of Pentecost recorded in the book of Acts. Not only does their biblical history include such names as Daniel, Jonah, Esther and Ezra, but also the Kurds are allies of the United States and have suffered terribly, Evans says.

When the U.S. asked the Kurds to stand up against Saddam Hussein, the brutal dictator gassed 4,000 villages with the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that the Kurds know exist, Evans says. While media trumpeted the news that none were found after the invasion of Iraq, Evans points out such reports ignore the fact that WMDs had already been moved to

Syria, something he first reported in his 2003 book, *Beyond Iraq*.

"The Kurdish people don't want to talk about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction being moved to Syria," Evans says. "It actually offends them. Kurdish women who have lost their sons, brothers, fathers and grandfathers looked me in the face and wept, saying, 'What, they don't believe there's weapons of mass destruction?'"

"[They say]: 'Come visit us. The weapons of mass destruction are in our souls. We had almost 200,000 of our people annihilated by weapons of mass destruction. Why don't they acknowledge this?'"

Despite the region's friendliness toward the U.S., Evans says America has failed to equip Kurdistan with the weapons it needs to defend itself and fight terrorists. He says the Kurds need a U.S. military base to repel Iranian agents and potential attacks from Turkish invaders drawn by the oil-rich fields of Karkuk.

Such a base could shift the direction of the war, enabling adequately armed Kurds to combat terrorists and take American troops out of harm's way, Evans says. "There's more stability and democracy in Kurdistan than there is in the 'Green Zone'—a 5-mile-wide region [in Baghdad] policed by the U.S.—simply because of their moral clarity," Evans says. "Every Kurd is an ally of America. They are probably the key to winning the war in Iraq."

So are American believers who are willing to pray. As Evans says in his book, "It is time for the United States to remember our heritage in God, recalibrate our moral compass of right and wrong to God's way of thinking, and stand beside

Israel, praying for her salvation, both for this world and the world to come.”

History will record whether people listened to his warning.

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