

NOTE FROM AUTHOR

THE NEO-GOTHIC BOUTIQUE HOTEL in the Tudor neighborhood one block from the United Nations skillfully merged Old World architecture and contemporary furnishings. In the lobby silhouettes of men and women depicting different time periods were surrounded by sculptured moss and hanging mirrors. The impression was of a vibrant and hip place to be.

As I sat in one of the six cream-colored contemporary chairs, my attention was drawn to a charming man with a full head of white hair. I happened to know he lived a stone's throw from Washington, D.C. Everyone seemed to know him, and I watched as both mullahs and diplomats warmly embraced him. Eventually he walked over to greet me.

By the way he addressed me one would have thought we were former college roommates. He said with a huge grin, "I am Mohammad, an American like you."

Everyone seemed to know Mohammad; mullahs and diplomats embraced him warmly. He smiled and asked, "You're having a hard time with names, aren't you?"

I nodded. "Yes. It seems like all Iranian diplomats are named Mohammad."

He laughed loudly. "We are; we're all Mohammad."

I was curious. "But who is the boss? I'm having a hard time understanding the chain of command."

He chuckled and waved his hands. "They are all the boss, or at least they think so." He spoke more softly and pointed to a man across the room, "But *that* Mohammad is the one you want to talk to."

I took note of the direction in which he pointed and sighed. "Getting into the hotel was a nightmare. There must be at least four hundred police officers forcing the public away. That did not include the SWAT team, CIA, and Secret Service. This hotel is guarded more tightly than Fort Knox."

Mohammad gave a slight nod. "Nobody gets in unless they have been pre-approved by Iran and cleared by the Secret Service."

The cast of strange characters in the hotel was surreamullahs, Iranian spies, representatives of terrorist-harboring (or supporting) regimes, such as Sudan, Syria, and even some Europeans. A few Holocaust-denying rabbis with their hands out were in attendance. They were trying to cash in on Iran's notoriety. The most infamous guest, of course, was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The U.S. government had provided almost as much security for him as for the president of the United States. Ahmadinejad had just delivered another ire-raising speech at the U.N., accusing the United States of blowing up the World Trade Towers to support Zionism.

I was keenly aware that by this time next year, if the world slept, Iran would have the atomic bomb. A quote by President Barack Obama reverberated through my mind: *“We can absorb a terrorist attack. We’ll do everything we can to prevent it, but even a 9/11, even the biggest attack ever . . . we absorbed it and we are stronger . . . A potential game changer would be a nuclear weapon in the hands of terrorists, blowing up a major American city.”*

Later on I met with twenty-one diplomats from Ahmadinejad’s inner circle. I was told that in less than two hours I would meet with the Iranian president in a private room. He had agreed to a half-hour exclusive interview with the Fox Network. Little did I know that this tiny man with the obsessive smile would bring three mullahs to the meeting to pray for him. When he sat down for the interview, his eyes lit up in response to one of the questions I had written for the host.

“Is the Mahdi coming soon?” asked Eric Shawn. “According to your theology, an apocalypse will usher him in.”

Ahmadinejad nodded. “Yes, the Mahdi is coming very, very soon.”

During the next twenty minutes, past hateful, anti-Semitic words of Ahmadinejad kept spinning through my mind like bright lasers:

- *The Jews are “filthy germs and savage beasts . . . A stinking corpse and rotten, dried tree . . . A cancerous bacterium stuck in a cesspool created by itself and its supporters.”*
- *“Zionists are the true manifestation of Satan . . . They kill women and children, young and old . . . Behind closed doors they make plans to advance their evil goals . . . They want to dominate the world.”*
- *There is only one solution to the Middle East problems, namely the annihilation and destruction of the Jewish State.”*
- *Israel should be “wiped off the map.”*

Iran will soon be a Persian, Shia, nuclear state, and the center of gravity for world terrorism. It could put nuclear arms into the hands of rogue regimes such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and al-Qaeda. This would precipitate a trillion-dollar nuclear arms race among the Sunni countries that reside along the two-hundred-mile stretch of the Persian Gulf.

I knew in my heart that the obsession of the mullahs to confront the Great Satan, America, and the Little Satan, Israel, was stranger and deadlier than fiction. Indeed, it would be a *GameChanger*.