

## Iran's Textbook: Curriculum for War & Martyrdom

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It is a little known fact that as Iran continues its pursuit of nuclear weapons in defiance of the international community, its school system is implanting another powerful weapon against the West through the minds of its schoolchildren. In the democracies, we go to enormous lengths to protect our children and to bring them up to take a humane and generous view of other peoples around the world. Sadly and dangerously, this is not an approach shared in other countries that are dominated by extremist ideologies.

The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP), an organisation whose purpose is to monitor textbooks throughout the Middle East, finds that Iranian textbooks are preparing its younger generation for participation and self-sacrifice in a global war against the West. CMIP's careful in-depth analysis of 155 Iranian textbooks and teachers' guides currently in use clearly and unequivocally observes that the very system that is responsible for instilling the values that will guide its society for generations to come is promoting the obligation of fighting the West worldwide.

It is in the interests of the democracies to make known and denounce this practice as threatening world peace and stability. European countries are undoubtedly a target of Iran as it prepares its population for conflict with the West. Preparations for this conflict in Iranian schools are fueled by an overt extreme religious ideology encouraging and teaching the benefits of "martyrdom." Indeed, during the Iran-Iraq war, 36,000 school children died as "martyrs." These 36,000 dead are forever lauded and never mourned. As noted in an Iranian "Defence Readiness Guide" textbook for Year 11 pupils published in 2004, "During the eight years of Holy Defence more than 500,000 school students were sent to the fronts. Thirty-six thousand martyrs, thousands of missing-in-action, invalids and liberated (former Prisoners of War) of this sacrificing section were offered to the Islamic revolution." At a time when the current Iranian regime follows even more stridently in the path of its Islamic revolutionary predecessors, these textbooks paint a highly disturbing picture of a world divided between the "infidel oppressive West" and "oppressed nations" under the leadership of revolutionary Iran. From a Sixth Form textbook, also published in 2004, we find the following exhortation, "We are the permanent oppressed in history, deprived and barefoot. Other than God we have no one. Even if we are cut to pieces a thousand times, we shall not stop fighting the oppressors." European countries can expect to share the negative consequences of such indoctrination. The war intended by Iran and taught in its schools is not necessarily a conventional war utilising tanks and aircraft. It will more likely take the form of terrorist attacks against vulnerable points in the West, exploiting the very openness of our countries, as already perpetrated by Iranians in Germany and Argentina and by Iranian-backed Hezbollah against French, Americans, Israelis and others. The on-going recruitment of tens of thousands of young men and women to the "army of suicide bombers" should not escape the attention of European governments. While America is described as Iran's number one oppressor and as "The Great Satan", we in Europe stand in the same line of fire. The West in general, along with Russia, is described as "World Devourers" and "The Arrogant Ones." The false and distorted hate teaching that is occurring can be boiled down to this: "Our enemies are inherently evil, they are enemies of Islam and they are enemies of the Iranian people." What students are taught in schools matters. We have learned from the times of Nazi Germany to Stalinist Russia, to today's misguided jihadists, that a population bred on hate can wreak untold international havoc as well as harm itself in innumerable ways. It is incumbent upon our Governments and the EU institutions to understand the seriousness of this highly influential indoctrination and to speak out against it. This steady diet of teaching against the West and promoting martyrdom must be understood for what it is, a curriculum against our own values and ideals: against democracy, freedom under the law, genuine human rights, peaceful solution of conflicts and tolerance of other faiths and cultural identities.

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