Peace in the Middle East (by Xmas 2014): Nukes

I have the solution to the full-blown crisis in the Middle East, and as usual, America is the only country that can do it right. Russia has the resources, but let's face it — they're too fundamentally disorganized and sentimentalist to make it happen the way it needs to. No, only America can solve this human catastrophe. Sweet, rational, reasonable, capitalist America can do it tomorrow, and for good.

Here's the problem: there are two more or less evenly-matched factions, with a host of smaller groups that are forced to affiliate with one faction or the other, or risk destruction. They have the full array of modern means by which to kill each other — arsenals that would put Hitler's Wehrmacht to flight several times over. They are, the two interests opposed in the Middle East and on into Afghanistan, a perfectly-honed killing machine, and they will slaughter until some third party intervenes to arrest the slaughter, only to resume again after the third party leaves. As soon as one side gains an advantage sufficient for victory, someone steps in with just enough authority to prevent a necessarily bloody, one-sided religious and cultural annihilation. The problem has plagued the area since at least recorded history, and probably longer, and all attempts at a peaceful solution have met with failure.

Until now.

The only reason the United States and Soviet Russia didn't end up going back to war almost immediately after WWII — five to ten years, tops — was fear of the nuclear bomb. We almost went to war several times afterwards *anyway*, pulled back from the edge by the certainty that destroying each other would be foolish and useless if the only thing that we accomplished in so doing was our own destruction. So here's the deal — we give

every group of at least 10,000 members within every faction five hydrogen bombs. For you laymen out there, a hydrogen or thermonuclear bomb clocks in around 500 kilotons ("Little Boy," the truth-nugget America dropped on Hiroshima for the unthinkable crime of obstinacy, clocked in at 16 kilotons), enough to level a medium-sized city. That includes Nusra, ISIS, Iraq, the Iraqi Kurds, the Syrian Kurds, Assad's regime, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the Taliban — everyone. Everyone gets enough nuclear ass to wipe the other portion off the face of the earth, plus a little bit left over to use as they please.

Now I know what you're thinking. "We've worked so hard to prevent these groups from getting nukes — what's to stop them from using them irresponsibly, against each other, or against us? They want to destroy our freedom, and freedom is notoriously vulnerable to atomic weaponry." That's a valid concern. But while it's *possible* that our gift to the Middle East of enough fire and anger to destroy itself several times over, with the push of a button, another possibility exists: peace.

I said it. It's possible — even *likely*, I would argue, that, faced with the very real possibility of nuclear annihilation — total destruction, the kind where nobody gets anything, and in such a way that your soul gets trapped here on earth by the blast, do not pass go, do not ascend to heaven — each faction would look to make peace with each other, and with us. Nuclear weapons have a strange way of inspiring even the biggest zealots among us to exercise restraint. Zealotry is usually tied to egotism and a fear of being destroyed — a desire for sex and procreation and the assurance that one will be free to make children who can in turn make children. Arm everyone with nukes, and we'll all be safe.

What's the downside? Well, it'll be a tough sell for some

countries. Israel has been justifiably concerned that if Arab countries and Iran get their hands on nukes, that they will use the nukes against them, and wipe them off the map. Surely, however, this is rhetoric — the Arab countries and Iran really just want Israel for themselves. And, once again, 2500 kilotons would destroy Israel utterly — nobody could have it. No, I think Israel would be safer, if anything, were it to be surrounded with suddenly-responsible people. Nukes are like the philosopher's stone of radicalism, causing the most hardline beheaders to morph into paragons of conservatism and restraint. It should be at the point where there's at least one nuke in every city in the Middle East, pointing at some other city. Sure, it'd be terrifying — but nothing would happen. Guarantee it.

And just to make sure, we could enable a trigger mechanism with a GPS function that would detonate if anyone screwed with it, and detonate if it was moved out of the Middle East. We can build cars that drive themselves. We can make a GPS nuke that won't travel. It's not rocket science.

We'd do it all at once. Make an announcement: "Check it out. Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Yazidi, Kurds, Turkey, Hezbollah, Armenia, Hamas, Kuwait, Taliban, Afghanistan, on December 1st, at 1200, we're going to be flying planes full of nuclear anger into your countries. Resistance is futile. If you shoot at the planes they'll just drop the bombs instead and see how you like that. Take possession of the nukes — they will be attached to simple trigger mechanisms that require only the push of a conveniently big red button — and let our planes fly away, in peace. Good luck and godspeed."

This is a fine and workable idea. I will get some good sleep at night — mighty good sleep — as the fire burning the Middle East is put out for once and for all. Faced with the abyss, rather than platitudes — there's no honor in getting destroyed for nothing, without the chance to even think of Allah or God

or whomever — people would settle into the same boring, quotidian routines that we've come to resent.